

The COSMOPOLITAN

THE WORLD IS MY COUNTRY
AND ALL MANKIND ARE MY COUNTRYMEN

VOL. I.

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A NEW YEAR'S GHOST.

BY ERNST WICHERT.

I.

EVE of the New Year! The clock in the tower of the ancient church on the market-place had already struck eleven, in the solemn tones familiar to the inhabitants for centuries. The streets were perfectly still. Whoever intended to greet the New Year merrily at a ball or the hospitable table of intimate friends, had been housed long ago, and those that found congenial society in taverns or beer-shops were not yet inclined to move. There was not a quieter hour of the night in the whole year, as the watchman truly remarked, than this closing one.

Poor Marie was alone in the house; it was her duty to keep awake until her employers returned.

Only a little more than a twelvemonth ago she had been universally called "pretty Marie," and since then she had undoubtedly grown still prettier, for she was in that spring-time of life when "all the buds are blooming" and daily unfolded fresh charms; but the few that now mentioned her called her "poor Marie." And they had good reason to do so.

"Pretty Marie" was the daughter of a petty official, but one whose services were needed by every body. Thus, though his salary was very small, he received a great many fees, which in the aggregate amounted to a much larger sum, so that he could defray his household expenses without having any anxiety about "making both ends meet." And as it was a saying of his that a man only lived once, and as he took no thought beyond the present hour, he unfortunately did not trouble herself about savings, but lived in a pretty house, kept a maid, bought handsome clothing for his wife and children, and always had a nice dinner to set before a chance guest on Sunday.

The pretty daughter, without seeking to do so, attracted a great many young men belonging to higher circles. It was so easy to obtain admittance to the house, and everything was so merry and unconstrained there. Perhaps one of them might have had serious intentions. Marie had certainly expected an offer of marriage from one young man, who was soon to have a good position. He had even given her his photograph. She willingly overlooked a slight limp he had.

This pleasant life ended very suddenly. Her young, vigorous father was confined to his bed by a severe illness. As he did not, on his recovery, spare himself in order to avoid farther diminution of his income, a second attack followed, and, after a few months of anxiety and grief, he was borne to the churchyard.

The funeral was "first-class;" the family considered this due to his memory, on account of their numerous relatives and friends. But the expenses swallowed up the greater portion of the small amount of property left by the dead man. The widow had a very small pension. The younger children were cared for by compassionate friends. Marie was "old enough" to be able to earn her own living.

It happened, fortunately, that she obtained a situation as "maid" in an aristocratic family. She had the lighter duties of a chamber-maid to perform, and also to help her mistress dress and to pour out tea in the evening. If required, she read aloud and made purchases. It was part of her service to be always well dressed, that she might appear in the street with her mistress, if desired. She led no easy life, but she was permitted, at least, to retain the appearance of a young lady.

This was of great importance to her. Perhaps she was not vainer than pretty girls

usually are, but she would not have married a man below her father's position in life, or one that did not possess an income that would enable her to live as she had been accustomed to do at home.

Her employers were to spend New Year's eve away, and the maid had received permission to seek her own pleasure. The coachman was in the stable with the horses, and the footman was keeping him company until the carriage was needed at one o'clock. Marie was alone in the sitting-room. She must keep awake to be ready to help her mistress undress when she returned.

She had locked or bolted all the doors leading into the corridor; no accidental entrance must startle her. The doors were high and narrow, enamelled in white with gold decorations, and surmounted by shell-shaped ornaments. The few rays of light from the street lamps, which made their way through the narrow opening between the heavy damask window-curtains, lingered almost entirely upon them, except when they occasionally glided to the decorations of the ceiling, the glass prisms of the chandelier, or the bronze candelabra protruding from the dark tapestry. Marie sat in the last room near a small lamp, whose dim light only illumined the table, which she had pushed near the stove. The stillness surrounding her seemed uncanny; there was no sound save the damp snow-flakes beating against the panes.

She was busy. On the table lay a hymn-book with a gilt cross upon its black cover, but it had long since been closed and laid aside for the New Year, which must be opened with pious thoughts. An open novel beside it had probably amused her for a while. Now, however, she was shuffling cards. Again and again she questioned them to learn what fate had in store for her during the coming year, but she never seemed to find what she expected or desired. The horrid cards! How stupid her employment was growing!

By way of a change she rose, went to the window, drew the curtain aside, and looked out. Whole stories of the opposite houses were brilliantly lighted.

"There," she thought, "are gathered those to whom the Old Year brought nothing but pleasures; now, with brimming glasses, they will joyously greet the new

one. Once we were just as gay. But that is all over. All my hopes are buried. One year will now pass like another in monotonous servitude, and nothing be left over from my scanty wages. What is the use of saving a few paltry pennies? A poor girl cannot get on in life if she remains virtuous. And the little pretty speeches—no one means them seriously. Rich people! Everything drops into their laps. And they really don't deserve it. But people don't ask about that. Whoever is destined to good luck has it. Ah, if I could once—"

Marie sighed deeply, went back to the little table, and took up the cards, but instantly flung them down again.

"They will only lie," she murmured; "fortune cannot be constrained. If one could only sleep!"

Taking the lamp, she went into her mistress' room to see again that everything was in order. There stood the two beds under a blue-silk canopy, the wardrobe with its richly carved-oak doors, and close beside it the baroness' tall Venetian dressing-glass, with the large lamps shining at each side and a soft fur rug in front of it. Marie glanced into the mirror as she passed it, and looked into it again on her way back.

"The baroness is just about my height," she thought; "but she isn't nearly so pretty. Ah, if she did not have such beautiful dresses and glittering jewels—"

Marie found nothing to do, and went back to her arm-chair by the stove. Taking up the novel, she read a few pages, then glanced through the last chapter. Her eyelids were so heavy, and her lips constantly parted in a yawn. She leaned her head on her hand, nodded, hastily straightened herself, and took another position. But the very next minute—

II.

"No, this won't do! New Year's eve mustn't be spent so. People must have some amusement. But how is one to find it, if one is all alone? Aha, but a girl isn't alone if she can see herself in a looking-glass. The baroness' costumes! It's such an innocent amusement to occupy one's self with one's own beloved person. Can any body be in less dangerous company?"

The thought darted into Marie's mind like a flash of lightning, and she could not re-



"SUDDENLY SHE SEEMED TO GROW RIGID."

sist the temptation. Hurrying lightly into the bed-room, she lighted the lamps on both sides of the mirror, advanced, retired, bowed her fair little head to the right and left, raised and lowered her round chin, laughed and showed her pearly teeth, looked sorrowful, and nodded to her image.

"A very pretty face, a dainty figure. Yes, indeed! We might as well confess it to each other. Who else looks like that? When one is a poor girl! Ah! if I were the baroness, and could have my hair dressed like hers, wear flowers, silks, and jewels! Then you would stare. Yes, you would."

Scarcely had the thought entered her mind, ere her slender little fingers were busy among her braids. How had she managed to seize brush and comb so quickly? How gracefully the little locks curled above her brow, how smooth the braids were! Now, a red and a white rose! The pasteboard box where the baroness kept her flowers was close at hand; she need only lift the lid. There, this little bouquet was the very thing. No, this one was still better—and this—suited her face bewitchingly.

But the ugly, dark, woollen dress, and the smooth, plain collar! She needed a silk dress, light-blue or white, trimmed with airy lace; and the shoulders—

"I wonder if the baroness locked the wardrobe. She often leaves the key. I'll see. What harm will it do? Just for fun. And this is New Year's eve! She won't know anything about it.

"Ah, how superb! It doesn't seem so when the baroness wears it herself. One is used to seeing her. But if I— Which dress shall I choose? Each one is handsomer than the other. But they are certainly not equally becoming to her. Pshaw! I'll try them all on. That will be the most fun, and there's plenty of time.

"This scarlet is too striking. This white satin—beautiful, but it needs rouge. The light-blue one—it looks so plain, and yet the material is extremely costly, and the trimmings—the lace! Yes, yes, you suit me. Marie, you look very aristocratic, really very aristocratic."

And she bowed to her image in the mirror, curtsied very low, and rose gracefully again, glanced coquettishly over her white shoulder, draped herself in a light shawl, played with a carved ivory fan.

"The toilette is complete. Nothing is wanting except some diamond ornaments. But they are really necessary! The baroness keeps hers in this little box. It is locked, of course. And she has taken the key with her. What a pity! This dress really *requires* jewels. It looks so unfinished without them, not a bit aristocratic. Just a necklace, a bracelet—

"I wonder if any of my keys would fit? Perhaps so. I might try. This one—or this? Too large—too small. But this one? Where is the harm? I don't mean to take anything! Ah, how easily the key turns! And the lid flies open directly. How they flash and sparkle! How superb!"

Hastily seizing the bracelets, she clasped them round her slender wrists, then fastened a glittering ornament on the left of the gleaming white satin robe. She thrust small glittering gems in the pink lobes of her little ears, put rings on her fingers, two or three on each. Nothing was left in the casket.

How beautiful the girl was! The mirror had never reflected a fairer face. Was this poor Marie? She could not weary of gazing at herself. Still, it would not have been unpleasant if a "certain person" could have admired her in all this magnificence; accidentally, of course, perhaps through the key-hole. Where was he now? Amusing himself somewhere, no doubt, without a thought of her.

The clock in the church-tower struck twelve slow, solemn strokes.

"They won't come back for an hour. There is no need of hurrying. I can hear the carriage when it goes for them. That will give me plenty of time to undress."

The deep tones sounded like the bass notes of a waltz which she hummed merrily.

She threw back her train, bent gracefully to and fro, sat down, flirted her fan, but always kept her eyes fixed steadily on the mirror. Suddenly she seemed to grow rigid, every trace of color faded from her cheeks, her terrified gaze rested on a spot just above the left shoulder of her image, which now also seemed petrified. The face of a man appeared in distinct outlines against the dark background.

Marie wanted to shriek, but she could not utter a sound. Could she have been mistaken? Certainly not in the fact that a man

was standing behind her. His eyes moved and the lips smiled sarcastically. But was it really the one of whom she had been thinking? True, the figure moved before her eyes, as though the lamp-light flickered incessantly, and the features constantly grew more indistinct. But the resemblance—Under the hooked nose a little, dark moustache twisted sharply upward at both sides, and the eyebrows curved upward in the same direction from the brow; the hair parted in two separate locks from the narrow forehead, and a small goatee seemed to lengthen the long chin. The face had not formerly appeared to her so intelligent, the eye-brows so much arched, nor the goatee so pointed. Yet, no mistake was possible. And the grey eyes sparkled so knowingly at her, she would have liked to sink into the earth.

"Sir," she began in a low, trembling voice, after she had somewhat recovered from the first fright, "with what object—"

"The most innocent one in the world, *fraulein*," he answered; "I have only come to express my sincere admiration, and to offer my services. You are certainly looking most charming. It would be a great pity, if you had dressed merely for yourself."

"But this dress—these jewels—" she began hastily, and then paused.

"I know what you are going to say," he answered smiling. "I am a thoroughly unprejudiced man. This dress, these flowers, and gems would not be any more becoming had destiny made you the wealthy woman from whom you borrow them. Your beauty has the best right to them."

"You apologize too kindly, sir," Marie ventured to reply.

He was now standing before her, attired in faultless evening costume, hat in hand.

"I have nothing to apologize for," he answered bowing courteously. "Everything natural explains itself. There are no justifiable distinctions between human beings, save those that nature has herself imposed. It is always a grateful task to level artificial ones. And one need only take a sufficiently high stand to see the disappearance of the petty scruples, which unhappily often paralyze energy."

These words greatly soothed Marie.

"If I only knew, sir," she said more cordially.

"Not who I am?" he interrupted.

"No, only whether I am not mistaken," she murmured in embarrassment.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"True, when a man is dressed for a ball, has had his hair curled, and donned a swallow-tailed coat of the latest fashion— But what is the use of calling everything by its right name? Let me be 'Sir Good Luck' to you this evening. Indeed, I have no other occupation just now than to make myself useful to those that need me."

"That is very kind," said Marie, who was again somewhat puzzled. "Only I don't understand. I certainly thought I had locked the doors."

"Oh, such a mere external hindrance as that!" he answered, shrugging his shoulders. "I should dishonor my name if I let that deter me. But now, *fraulein*, we must not linger longer! We have barely two hours' time."

He advanced, his left foot dragging slightly at every step, and gallantly offered her his arm. She rested the tips of her fingers on it, but without moving, and asked in surprise what he meant.

He took her hand and held it firmly. She felt that any effort to withdraw it must be useless.

"My carriage is at the door," he replied, "In a few minutes we shall be at the New Year's ball, for which you have dressed so splendidly."

"No, no," she eagerly but not angrily replied.

Her heart was throbbing, and the blood crimsoned her cheeks.

"You ought to be sincere," he answered smiling, "When a lovely young lady puts on a ball-dress—and you were just humming a waltz."

"You heard that, sir—"

"Pray come without delay."

He drew her gently away, and she could not resist. A magnetic influence seemed to emanate from him. Marie closed her eyes as though fainting.

III.

THE next instant she was standing in the street. Her companion opened a carriage door, and lifted her in. She had barely time to see that two horses were harnessed to it, their nostrils appearing to send forth

showers of sparks. Nothing now seemed marvelous to her.

That *was* a drive. They appeared to be flying through the air. The wheels did not seem to touch the pavements at all. The horses' hoofs made no sound. The gas lanterns glided swiftly by. Suddenly Marie uttered an exclamation of terror.

"I've forgotten my gloves!" she cried.

"Oh, never mind that," replied her companion soothingly. "Why should a pretty little hand be disfigured by such an ugly thing? Do you want to hide all those handsome rings? Besides, everybody at our ball will have forgotten some trifle; it won't be noticed. They are in such a hurry to steal their pleasure— But here we are!"

A blaze of light was streaming from a spacious doorway into the street. Servants in showy livery darted out, and opened the carriage door. The first landing of the staircase was lined with a double row of gentlemen in dress-coats and white cravats. As the pair passed, Marie's companion limping slightly, they bowed like the ears of grain in a field when the wind blows over them. Up, up they went, over flight after flight of steps, covered with gay carpets and lighted with candelabra. The walls were lined with mirrors, and wherever Marie turned she saw herself.

At last they reached a vast hall, music greeted them, and dancers whirled by. A thousand gas jets were burning, but they looked like glowing coals, for the moon-like luster of electric globes outshone them. Every one seemed in motion, a vast circle, in which countless smaller circles were perpetually turning.

Marie tottered into the throng by her companion's side. Some one bowed before her. She felt herself seized by two powerful arms, and whirled around the hall. She had never danced so before. Her partner released her, and another instantly pressed forward. She had no time to rest. Her beauty seemed to exert a resistless spell on every one. A dozen were always waiting when she had made the circuit of the hall with one. And she fancied that some one was incessantly whispering into her ear:

"Quick, quick! Time is passing. We have only one second between the old and the new year."

Then she distinctly felt her partner draw

one of her rings from her finger. And she now perceived that several others were missing, which had doubtless been lost in the same way. The next partner also took his tribute, and so did the next. Marie was ashamed to say that the rings were not hers and submitted. The number of rings lessened. Then came the turn of the bracelets. Some one said, "We must pay for the music," and loosed the diamond clasp from her shoulder. Marie began to feel very much troubled. Where would all this end? But she was allowed no time for thought. They again drew her into the circle of dancers, whose faces all wore a greenish hue. The linked bracelet studded with diamonds became unfastened, and slipped down her dress. Many hands seized it, tore it to pieces, and divided the links. Again the dance whirled on.

Suddenly there was a movement among the crowd. Many fled to the outer doors, but found them locked. The owner of the hall had appeared, a corpulent, be-rouged dame, with elaborately dressed hair, who wore a scarlet robe, extremely low in the neck. Behind her walked a footman, carrying two plates, and occasionally shaking the gold coins they contained. It was obvious that every body that attended the ball was expected to pay due acknowledgment in ready money. Marie had nothing. Her companion, for whom she anxiously looked, had vanished. The scarlet lady measured her with an annihilating glance, and pointed to an adjoining room. She was forced to obey the sign. The doors were instantly locked behind her.

She was now alone with an old woman, who, without heeding her tears and entreaties, instantly set to work to strip off her silk dress. Then, throwing a ragged woollen shawl over her bare shoulders, she pushed her through a little side door, calling scornfully after her:

"A happy New Year, little daughter!"

Marie fancied she fell a long, long distance. At last she found herself lying on the snow in the street, with a keen wind drifting the flakes over her. She was shivering with cold, and drew the shawl closely around her, but it gave no warmth. Rising, she ran swiftly down the street, keeping close to the houses. She felt so sorrowful and sobbed aloud, trembling with

cold and fright. What should she do if she returned home? How dared she hope for pardon? And if she remained away, where should she go? The police would soon be on her track, and arrest her for a thief. Who would believe that she did not mean to take the baroness' valuables, and that she had been so badly treated? She could not even tell to what house she had been conveyed. She shuddered when she thought of the prison; it had been so vividly described in the novel she had just read. A thief? No, she would not survive that disgrace.

She turned into a narrow side street which led down to the river. It was not yet frozen solid, but the water lay motionless like molten lead, and the ice crystals glittered in the light of the lanterns burning on the quay.

On this side the shore was tolerably flat, the street led down to a raft moored to the bank by chains, and reached by a wooden bridge. Marie tottered across it, and kneeling on the edge, as the washerwomen do, leaned over and looked into the black water. She tried to pray, but in her agony could not even remember the Lord's prayer. That to save herself from disgrace she must plunge down, she felt sure, but she grieved so sorely for her young life. She wished that some one would give her a push from behind, that it might happen partly against her will.

Then she heard a loud noise very near. Several people came tramping heavily along.

"Where is she?" was asked.

"There, there!"

Search was evidently being made for her. The voices grew louder. Two or three of her pursuers leaped on the raft behind her, tipping it upward. She fancied she heard the baroness speak, and finally call her by name. She dared not hesitate longer; a

movement of her body forward—she closed her eyes—clasped her hands—and—

IV.

RENEWED and violent pounding on the door. "Marie! Marie! Don't you hear? Can any body sleep so soundly?"

"Something must have happened to her? Send for a locksmith."

"Marie—Marie!"

"Your ladyship—"

"Ah! at last. Open the door!"

"I really—didn't mean—"

"Open the door, child! We want to get into the room."

"Into the room? Oh, heavens! Into the room—yes, the lamp— Directly, directly!"

The key was hastily turned.

"It is really you—my lady—and I—and everything was only—"

Marie rubbed her forehead, in which the edge of the book had made a deep mark, and her sleepy eyes.

"Pardon me—"

"But how soundly you slept!"

"And such a dream," said Marie. "If you knew— I shall never forget this New Year's eve as long as I live."

"Go to bed now, it's really very late. And a happy New Year, Marie."

"A happy New Year!"

What will it bring poor Marie? I can guess. A letter is on the way, and will be delivered by the postman early on the morrow, a letter addressed in a man's handwriting. Just where the envelope is gummed there is a little picture which, in the dim light, I mistook for a bursting bomb, but it really represents a flaming heart. It may be supposed that this emblem on a New Year's letter it not without meaning. But what is written inside—is the letter's secret.

Translated for THE COSMOPOLITAN.



THE RESURRECTION OF SIDDHARTÂ.

BY AUG. GLARDON.

I.

THE aged priest Amrah returned to his home under a temperature of ninety-five degrees in the shade, and seemed to pay no attention to the intense heat. With an air of indignation, and muttering incoherently to himself, he traversed with short, hurried steps the highway leading from Odhipoor to Ramelah, where it curves along the southern shores of the lake. When he reached the extreme end of the promontory, he stopped suddenly and raised his head.

The view was a grand one. On the right stood the city, white as milk, rising tier above tier along the lowest slopes of a hill, its cubes of masonry cut into thousands on the background of dark green mango groves. On the left the plain spread out, as far as the eye could see, its fields of sorghum ready for the sickle; and, in the warm mists of the horizon, the flying silhouette of the peaks of Aravalli could be seen. The promontory upon which Amrah stood fell perpendicularly into the lake. On the opposite bank, white marble palaces and bathing pavilions of a thousand colors alternated with groups of date trees, fig and tamarind; and all this charming landscape decoration was repeated inversely in the mirage of the gray waters below.

Amrah's eyes fixed themselves on a little isle, a wondrous clump of verdure and of flowers, where the slender colonnade of a palace showed through copses of lemon trees. But the old Brahman was thinking of nothing less than admiring it. His little eyes, glittering with covetousness, seemed to devour with their regard the enchanting island. His brows were knit frowningly, and his fingers kneaded fiercely a magnificent necklace of pearls that he held in his hand. He made a gesture of vexation, and, turning to the left, disappeared in a ravine, which in a few minutes brought him to his dwelling.

In the midst of rambling grounds, susceptible of cultivation but left fallow to mark the sanctity of the spot, a high rectangular wall inclosed a kind of garden, or

rather forest, whence the roof of a sugar-loaf-shaped pagoda pointed toward the sky.

Amrah pushed open a worm-eaten door with his foot, and entered an avenue that wound between mango, fig, and banian trees, whose huge and distorted trunks dipped into thickets of herbaceous plants.

Lianas as thick as pythons, rising from the bosom of masses of gigantic ferns, strained in their voluminous folds the towering monarchs of primeval growth. In the greenish twilight fluttered the wings of innumerable moths, and under the tall grass the murmuring of flowing water could be heard. After the dust of the sun-searched soil, and the dazzling glare of the open air, there was something startling in the contrast.

A feeble but never-failing spring made the fortune of this little bit of ground. It was the only one for miles around, and the popular imagination had attributed its origin to an otherwise terrible divinity, the sinister Kâli. Hence the erection of a temple, of which Amrah was at present the officiating priest.

When he had arrived at the end of the long alley of verdure, the old man stopped to cast a look of contempt on the edifice that had served him as a dwelling for almost the half of a century.

An artist might have uttered a cry of admiration. The pagoda was small, it is true; its roof, formed of truncated cones piled one upon the other, diminishing in size toward the top, was not much higher than the fig trees that pressed upon it almost to suffocation. But how decrepit with age and venerable the little old pagoda was! Its reddish sandstone, tinted green by the moisture of the long rains and perforated with millions of little holes, looked as though half decayed. From the finely fluted pilasters set in the walls a stone had fallen here and there, and turtle-doves nested in the cavities. Plump pigeons cooed along the cornices. A black monkey with scarlet face, seated on the edge of the roof, his hands resting on his knees, seemed placed

there expressly to personify the genius of the spot. He descended precipitately at the sight of his master, and, approaching him coaxingly, was about to rummage the folds of his girdle, where more than once before he had been taught to find toothsome delicacies meant for him. But the priest was in a bad humor.

"Down, Hanouman; *teith d'an diabrail leat!*" (Go to the devil!) the reverend Brahman cried.

This very uncanonical exclamation was accompanied by a gesture so terrifying that the poor animal fled incontinently with his tail in the air.

"Lalloo!" vociferated the Brahman. "Hey, Lalloo! where in the world are you?"

A yawn was the answer to this appeal, and a young boy, clad in a handkerchief of Indian muslin, came out of a bamboo hut, stretching his arms. The threatening mien of his patron gave him a salutary shock, and he ran up to him murmuring the customary, "*Cia an nith is dil leat?*" (What is your pleasure?)

"My pleasure! My pleasure!" replied the priest. "You care much about it! Is this the way you guard the house during my absence? And if some faithful worshiper had come?"

"I would have waked up, Sahib. The *Deagh-Mhathair** (Good Mother) would not let me sleep."

"Hold your tongue, you speak nonsense. And yet, what matter?"

The old man raised his arms to Heaven to take it to witness that his discouragement was justified.

"Yes," he added in a doleful voice, "the good days are gone by for the *Deagh-Mhathair*! Since that accursed Bâboo hit upon the scheme of building a temple to *Chrishna Tighearna* (Lord Chrishna), the Good Mother has been abandoned; she, the patroness of the realm. And as for us, all that is left us is to die of hunger!"

From the depths of his rotund paunch the good man drew a profound sigh. He looked at the necklace that he still held in his hand, and anger again took possession of him.

"See," said he, "that is all his majesty gave me. I demanded of him a new pagoda

and a small domain in honor of the patron goddess, and he answered me with this trifle. All the favors, all the smiles to-day, are for that ill-begotten god, who has no other merit than to be the latest comer in our good city of Odhipoor. By the belly of Brahma, what do they want me to do with three or four dozen pearls?"

He threw the necklace at Lalloo's face, who dodged, and ran to pick up the precious ornament.

"Is it for me? Can I have it?" cried he with beaming face.

"How, rogue! A necklace worth a thousand crowns, the like of which could not be found in the kingdom! Give it back quick, or——"

Lalloo handed the necklace to his master, but this time he did not escape the cuff that struck him full on the jaw.

After this summary punishment, Amrah, his soul much relieved, directed his steps majestically toward the pagoda. The door was closed only with a latch, an old oaken door covered with filigree work of iron wrought with marvelous delicacy. He opened it, and, closing it behind him, found himself plunged in the cool obscurity of the sanctuary.

There were no windows, and it might have been pitch dark night, were it not for a little opening, skillfully effected above the door between two rough hewn stones. A thin ray of light by this means stole into the pagoda, and penetrated to the lowest recesses, causing the menacing image of the goddess to rise from the darkness, a statue of polished ebony, perhaps two thousand years old, and of a diabolical aspect. In its eyes, formed of large rubies circled with unburnished silver, danced a ruddy flame. A frightful grin twisted its mouth, bringing into view two rows of pointed teeth and causing to protrude a tongue as red as blood. From its neck and arms hung strings of rich jewels, and its breast was crossed diagonally by a chaplet of little skulls in polished ivory, as big as oranges. The lower part of the body was almost hidden in darkness; but two massive and crooked legs could be vaguely perceived, resting on the carcass of a dead tiger.

The priest crossed the sanctuary in order to hang the newly acquired collar on the neck of the goddess, when he stumbled in

* Popular name of Goddess Kâli.

the darkness. A soft body barred his way. He stooped with an exclamation of terror, and ascertained that a man was there, prostrate in the attitude of prayer, but insensible and cold. A corpse, a corpse in the house of God ; that was the last straw !

At this moment Lalloo entered, attracted by the unwonted cry whose echo had shaken the edifice. Aided by the Brahman, who was panting with fright, he carried the unfortunate into the light of day. He had come, it seemed, to expire at the feet of the goddess. "It is a fakir," said he, after having examined him.

II.

It was in truth a fakir ; the naked limbs were smeared with ashes ; the breast zebraed with alternate lines of red and white, the unkempt hair, proclaimed him such. That tall, emaciated form stretched out in the sun was indeed that of an ascetic. Amrah considered him in silence, asking himself if he had never before seen this personage and how it happened that he had stranded on his premises.

All at once the fakir's breast arose, then sank slowly ; a moan issued from his lips, his eyes opened. He threw around him an astonished gaze and made a sign that he was thirsty. They gave him a drink ; then he arose, and, supporting himself on the shoulder of the young man, went and lay down at the foot of a banian tree. Thus far he had not spoken a word. As for the Brahman, the violent shock had struck him dumb.

"My brother," said he to the fakir at last, "*An sigh Dé Ort !*" (God's peace be on you !) "You are welcome in the house of Kâli ; but who are you, pray, and why have I found you just now at the feet of the Good Mother in this miserable condition ?"

The fakir pressed his hand on his heart and bowed with a strange smile on his face.

"It was only a fainting fit," he murmured. "I have been traveling five days without tasting food. Please give me a little milk. Father, am I so changed that you do not know me any more ?"

Amrah fixed a searching regard on that face, wasted by suffering, that nevertheless smiled on him.

"Siddhartâ !" he cried in a hoarse voice. "No, it is not possible. You could not have changed in this way !"

As the fakir continued to smile, he turned toward his attendant and said to him with comical roughness :

"What are you doing there ? Haven't you been told to go after milk ?"

Then he threw himself on the breast of the fakir and pressed him in his arms without saying a word ; but the tears ran down his fat cheeks.

The emotion of the old priest will appear natural when it is known that Siddhartâ was the only son of his sister, and that this nephew brought up by him in the shade of the sanctuary he had made his heir : for he had had no children himself by the wife whom he had married before consecrating himself to the service of the Goddess Kâli.

In India the Brahmans are the sacerdotal caste ; but all Brahmans are not priests. Those who are called by circumstances to enter into holy orders must first pass some years in the marriage state. This initiation into social life forms a part of their education. Siddhartâ, consequently, had left the pagoda at the age of fifteen to get married. His uncle had married him to a daughter of one of his friends, and the young couple went to the city to live. A son having been born of this union, they waited until five years had passed ; then Siddhartâ said adieu forever to his wife, who from that time forward was compelled to live in widowhood supported by the state. He himself took his departure in the character of a fakir, or begging monk, to make the tour of the holy cities of Hindostan. As for the child, his mother kept him until he had reached the age of ten years, after which she handed him over to the aged Amrah to be brought up in the shade of the sanctuary. Him we have seen under the name of Lalloo, performing the functions of servitor at his grand-uncle's side, while waiting to be initiated in his turn into the mysteries of life.

During seven long years Siddhartâ had traveled through that vast country that extends from the sources of the Indus to Cape Camorin, always with naked feet, sometimes on his hands and knees ; for the Good Mother is a hard mistress, requiring her slaves to inflict upon themselves for her pleasure all kinds of tortures. He had passed whole months in the jungle, at times standing day after day on one foot under the burning rays of the sun, taking rest neither

day nor night, at times seated under a fig tree meditating on the vanity of the world and absorbed in his reflections to that extent that he often remained eight days without taking nourishment. At other times he might have been found at the shrine of a pagoda at Benares or Poshkare assiduously devoting himself to the teachings of some priest renowned for wisdom, or practicing the rites of occult worship. He was of a nervous temperament, given to asceticism and mystic reveries, and little by little his love became sublimed through the practice of the sacred duties of his profession, and at the same time his body deadened and hardened through his austerities and freed from all carnal passion, had become the docile instrument of a soul devoured by holiness and craving for spiritual power. Thus prepared to play in his own country the glorious rôle of a representative of the deity, Siddhartā had returned to Odhipoor, his head filled with ambitious dreams, little imagining the disaster that awaited him.

III.

THE dwelling of the priest of Kāli was situated at the eastern end of the garden, about a stone's throw from the pagoda. It was an edifice of a unique form and very ancient, composed of three square structures standing in a row behind a veranda, and surmounted by little flat domes.

One of these served as sleeping room; another was the kitchen. The third inclosed the Sacred Spring (*tobar naom:tha*), which issued from the ground at the bottom of a circular basin and found exit through an opening in the wall, whence it poured its waters into irrigation trenches. Here it was comparatively cool, and the priest used it as a cellar. Each day the country people brought one or two jars of milk; a box contained the sacks of corn, sorghum, and wheat. A niche hollowed in the wall was filled with earthen pans of clarified butter; bananas hung from a beam in orderly array. And that was all. The priests of Kāli are vowed to frugality.

Every evening after sundown Lalloo would knead a dozen cakes, bake them on a piece of sheet-iron, cover them with melted butter, and present them with great ceremony to his master, who would eat three or four and leave the rest to him; after which they

would drink a couple of quarts of cold milk, swallow a few grains of roasted corn, and go to bed, the priest in his little anchorite's cell, Lalloo on the other side of the pagoda in his bamboo hut, like a watch-dog in his kennel. Ordinarily this was the routine of their existence, and was followed daily with the most perfect regularity.

However, on the day of Siddhartā's arrival there was an infraction of this rule. Lalloo went to bed, but his father and his grand-uncle remained up. They had naturally many things to say to each other, for they had been parted seven long years. Seated on their heels at the opposite ends of a mat stretched on the veranda, with the moonbeams playing about them among the pillars, they smoked from the same pipe alternately, the one speaking whilst the other smoked. There was no one to hear them; apart from Lalloo, who was sleeping with folded hands on the other side of the pagoda, they were alone in the vast inclosure. The profound silence of the night in the midst of their solitary surroundings gave a more distinct murmur to the stream. At intervals a lazy breath of air stirred the feathery crest of the date trees, giving a metallic sound. The bats flew in zigzags through the serene sky.

Siddhartā related the story of his peregrinations briefly, for he was a man of few words. He ended by detailing his plans for the future, and they were truly grand.

"You see, father, I have more than once been made to suffer when comparing the marvels of our cults at Bombay, Poonah, and Benares with the poverty of our endowment. The Good Mother is one of the greatest deities of our country; this pagoda is not worthy of her. That is why I say we must apply ourselves in the first place to obtaining money to construct one according to the plans I have brought with me. But, that's not all. We have here a holy well; what use have we made of it? To serve for ablutions, to irrigate the garden—it is not worth while to have holy water for that. I have seen a well at Ahmedabad not half as good as ours dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It has been surrounded with vast porticoes, and marble basins have been sunk in it, where hundreds of pilgrims can make their ablutions at the same time. The sick come to it to be cured of their maladies, sinners

bathe in it and are purified. That single spring (and it is not even constant) has made the fortune of the city. It adds luster to the name of Vishnu for hundreds of leagues around. Can we say as much for ours? No, can we? Well, father, all this must change. Odhipoor is the capital of a rich and populous kingdom; our Maharajah possesses immense treasures. Demand of him a dozen *lacs*,* and I undertake to affirm that, rebuilding our sanctuary, it will draw to it a hundred thousand pilgrims annually. We will take assistants; we will have a college for priests and schools for children. We shall finish, perhaps, thanks to the gold that shall fall in heaps into the coffers of the Good Mother, by building hospitals as they have done in Bombay and elsewhere. That will be—that will be the triumph of the sovereign of our hearts; that will be the glory of Odhipoor!"

The fakir arose. In the glow of his enthusiasm he took a few hurried steps on the sand, embracing with his glance the heavens and the earth, and drawing into his lungs in long-drawn breaths, the breeze of the evening.

Then he returned and seated himself again opposite the old priest, who handed him the pipe in silence. His depressed air struck Siddhartâ.

"What is the matter, father? One would think that my project did not please you. Have you any objections to make?"

"Simply one," answered Amrah, sadly; "but that is a weighty one. The Maharajah will never consent to the pecuniary sacrifice which you wish to impose on him."

"And why, pray; has he ceased during my absence to be the generous prince that he was?"

"During your absence, my son, many things have happened, and more than once I would have given much to have you near me. I fear that it is too late now."

The fakir crossed his arms on his breast.

"I am listening," he said briefly.

The old Brahman talked a long time, glad at last of being able to confide his grievances to a discreet ear. A short time after Siddhartâ's departure, a rich banker, who had some peccadilloes on his conscience, hit upon the idea of building a superb pagoda at his own expense in order to install there-

in a miraculous image of Chrishna. The Rajah had deigned to honor with his presence the inauguration of the edifice, and through the circumstance the popular favor was directed toward it. Was it any wonder? The worship of Chrishna, that effeminate and sensual semi-deity, had more attraction for worldly minds and for women than that of a divinity certainly superior, but austere and exacting as regards morals. The Good Mother had been abandoned and her courts had become a desert. In vain the heart-broken priest had organized processions to revive the popular zeal; the ryots alone had remained faithful to the worship of their fathers. Almost all the citizens had gone over to *Chrishna Tighearna*.

Then Amrah had thought to have erected in a prominent place a pagoda that would rival in splendor that of the banker; he had boldly demanded of the king the concession of the island and the funds necessary to build it. Unfortunately the priest of Chrishna, a stranger, had known how to gain the good graces of the royal house; Amrah's demand had been repulsed. Although beaten in the first encounter, the good man, nevertheless, was not discouraged. He had sought to influence the counsels of the King through the intervention of the queen, who had remained faithful to the ancient worship. But the accursed Lakshman had possessed the deftness to present to the King as his mistress a creature of his own, a creature of infernal beauty, malice and cunning; and when the priest of Kâli returned to the charge, they made fun of him.

"For, in short," said he, "was it not a mockery to give me a necklace when I asked for a house? I tell you, my dear child, the Rajah is bewitched; nothing can be done, nothing, unless," added the poor man, hoping still in spite of himself, "unless you who have studied so much can find a way to re-establish our affairs. Let us see; speak. Do you feel in yourself the strength to struggle against this abettor of Chrishna, against this evil-omened Lakshman, whom the Good Mother before now ought to have crushed like a louse?"

"I will think of it," answered Siddhartâ, laconically.

Amrah stooped forward to scrutinize the

*A lac amounts to \$50,000.

countenance of his companion. Siddhartā's face had the rigidity of marble, but a furrow had hollowed itself between his brows and his eyes darted lightning.

IV.

THE palace of the Maharajah (Great King) occupies the summit of the hill of Odhipoor and commands the city along its entire wall of sixty feet in height, which supports a terrace bordered by a parapet. Well, one morning on getting out of bed the king beheld on this terrace a spectacle that he did not expect: a man was sitting cross-legged on the parapet, with his face turned toward the royal apartments.

"Hey, hey!" said he; "there is some good fellow taking liberties. *Fan go foil!*" (Wait a little!)

He called a *valet de chambre*, who knew nothing, and ran to get information. No one had seen the unknown enter. He must have stolen upon the terrace at night by eluding the vigilance of the sentinels. His Majesty, Ganderrap IV., fell into a violent rage, had a half-dozen of his guards bastinadoed, and was going to order at least one of them shot, when he recollected very luckily that there was a British resident at Odhipoor, charged among other things with seeing that there shouldn't be any more summary executions in that realm.

In the mean time the major-domo, who had been sent to drive the man away, returned, saying that the man was a fakir.

"A fakir?" the King repeated sharply. "A fakir can't be driven off, it is true; but, you fool, you could beg him politely to go away."

"May your Majesty be merciful to me," answered the major-domo, bowing to the ground; "I did beg him to go away."

"But he is still there, in the same place!"

"Sire, he made no answer."

To the royal recollection a like occurrence had never been heard of before. Ganderrap IV. nearly went into a fit of apoplexy.

In spite of his obesity he passed rapidly through the peristyle, and advanced to the terrace:

"Hey, hey! father," he began in an angry tone.

He stopped, dumb with astonishment. The fakir was a Shivaite, a kind of people with whom it is not healthy to crack jokes.

Besides he did not look at the King, did not seem even to be aware of his presence. Immovable on the parapet, like a statue on its pedestal, he had the fixed and absorbed gaze of a man contemplating some distant object.

"Father," began the King again, with a shade of respect in his voice, "you are not aware, perhaps, that this terrace is private ground. It isn't as though I were offended at finding you here at this hour; and if you have something to ask of me?"

No answer, not a movement, nothing that might indicate that the fakir heard the words of the King. The latter was taken with a sort of terror. He stood there as if petrified, contemplating the man whom he thought he saw for the first time. The fakir had a tall form, broad shoulders and a deep breast. His face, with a low forehead, was severe in profile, with regular features; excessively thin, but of singular purity. His eyes glittered with an angry expression through the disordered clusters of his hair that fell over his countenance. One might have called it the mask of the God of retribution.

After a moment the King turned on his heels and re-entered the palace in a pensive frame of mind. He couldn't make anything of it. Perhaps all this procedure meant only the extravagant freak of a visionary. As a measure of precaution, however, he gave orders that no one should disturb the holy man; then he took up again the routine of his occupations, received his ministers, made believe as usual to transact business with them, went out on horseback to take a bath in the lake, and soon forgot all about the fakir.

But on his return in the evening he was struck as though by an electric shock on perceiving suddenly that the man was still there. He revolved in his brain various thoughts.

"Bah!" said he at last, "he must finish sooner or later by taking himself off."

And he went to bed.

The Maharajah of Odhipoor slept badly that night. When he awoke, the sun, already high in the heavens, bathed the terrace in its fires. Ganderrap IV. ran to the window. The fakir was there, in the same position, bareheaded under the burning sun.

An hour afterward the entire royal house-

hold departed without warning on a grand hunt that lasted until night-fall. Two hundred coolies had beaten the fields, penetrated the bushes, tracked the game, and the Rajah returned home proud of having killed with his own hand a couple of antelopes and three hares.

The fakir had not budged.

Ganderrap IV. rested still worse than the preceding night. He got up two or three times softly to take a look at the terrace. The deepest silence reigned on it, all was asleep under the soft light of the moon, the birds and the flowers; but the fakir was still there, and he assuredly did not sleep.

The King returned and lay down again. Lugubrious thoughts floated through his brain. His past came back to him; he felt in his conscience a vague uneasiness. In what had he been culpable? He could not say; however, he promised himself to release in the morning a poor devil whom he had kept in prison two years for having laughed in his presence. Slightly relieved after this resolution, he decided to go to sleep again. But he could not feel alone; his imagination showed him, through the walls, the fakir, immovable and rigid, brooding over the royal dwelling with his fixed and flaming eyes. And at moments as he listened it seemed to him that the fakir had moved; he heard him coming and sat up suddenly in his bed to be ready to receive him.

Finally his distress became so great that he called a servant and had his couch carried into a room opening toward the west, under the pretext that the rising sun—but, in fact, a king has no need of pretexts.

The third morning came. Ganderrap IV. felt completely broken down. He refused his breakfast and walked furiously through the palace at hap-hazard under the weight of an obsession which began to affect all his surroundings. The fakir was the theme of conversation around him; he ascended into the observatory: a new spectacle awaited him. Everywhere on the terraced roofs of the city were standing groups of curious citizens, pointing their fingers at the fakir. The wretch had chosen his post only too well; he could be seen from every direction as he sat on the parapet of the castle yonder.

By dint of thinking of it the Rajah had

ended by suspecting the design of the fakir. Shiva, whose marks this man bore, was the husband of Kâli; and, as his conscience was not without reproach as regards the Good Mother, he asked himself if he ought not to appeal to the priest of Kâli to have this enigma unriddled. But his pride not allowing him to make up his mind to this, he sent for his new friend and counselor, the priest of Chrishna, and led him to the terrace where no living soul had dared to show himself during three days. Lakshman questioned the fakir, who made no answer; his nostrils only became dilated, and a convulsive tremor took possession of him as if the presence of his adversary annoyed him.

The priest of Chrishna was not a very scrupulous man, yet he did not dare to persist in his interrogatories for fear of creating scandal, and fearing also, perhaps, the anger of the goddess Kâli's partisans. The King, as he led him back, asked his advice:

"Shall I send for Amrah?"

"*Nil go deimh en*" (by no means), "your Majesty. There is a conspiracy here to extort money from you."

"What shall I do with this man, then?"

"Leave him alone; he will finish by getting enough of it."

Another day (the fourth) passed without bringing any change in the fakir; the man must be of bronze. Then the King decided to send for Amrah.

The priest of Kâli did not condescend to answer this appeal in person; the young man, his servitor, made his appearance at the palace instead. Ganderrap IV. knit his brows, but swallowed the humiliation without saying a word. The representative of the divinity took a high tone:

"Sire," said he, "the Good Mother is enraged at your refusal of her legitimate demands. That is why her divine spouse has sent to you one of his servants."

"And what does this servant of Shiva calculate to do?"

"To wait."

"To wait—for what? Until when? And, in short, what does he want?"

"A pagoda," laconically answered the young Brahman, who sustained, without flinching, the angry gaze of the King.

There was silence. Ganderrap IV. twisted nervously in his fingers the fringed extremities of his sash.

"I suppose the Good Mother wants, at the least, five or six *lacs* of rupees?"

"Ten,"* answered Lalloo.

"Ten! Ten *lacs*! where does the Good Mother expect me to find ten *lacs* for her service?"

For all the answer Lalloo seated himself on the ground and began to finger his rosary, repeating his prayers in a low voice, as if resigned to a long stay.

The King, much astonished, looked at him in silence; such assurance made him smile.

"Come," said he, in a paternal voice, "we will say eight *lacs*. I will give eight *lacs* to the Good Mother, and you shall pray her to grant me her favor."

Lalloo was too absorbed to listen; he made no answer.

"Well," continued the King, a little ashamed of chaffering with the divinity, "I will give a piece of ground to build on, and another piece for a garden. Eight *lacs* and a grant of land is indeed no trifling present."

"Sire," said the young man, interrupting his devotions with an effort, "the earth belongs to God, who can do with it what he pleases."

Then he put himself to counting his beads again.

Ganderrap IV. felt a nervous twitching in his arms; he would have liked to strangle this impudent extortionist. However, he refrained from taking him by the collar; he knew that such an offense would outlaw him at a blow, and, king as he was, his subjects would turn from him as from the veriest pariah. As to having him thrown out doors, that wouldn't work any better. There was not one of his guards who would have dared to touch this individual with his finger. He contented himself with taking a few turns around the hall, sighing several times; then all at once, without looking at his interlocutor:

"Well," said he, bitterly, "I see we shall have to let that pass. Go and tell the lord fakir that his demand is granted."

V.

SIDDHARTĀ had given the King a month to execute his agreement; that gave him time to breathe. The first days were replete with the happiness he felt of being freed from a terrible nightmare. Ganderrap's sleep and

appetite were restored; he felt himself a new man. Excursions on the water, with fireworks at night, coursing and still-hunting, the dancing of bayadères and gorgeous fêtes succeeded each other in agreeable variety.

When, however, the King made known to his ministers the goddess Kālī's demand, they protested unanimously against such an extortion. They gave various weighty reasons for their view of the case. The Minister of the Exchequer declared that he would rather hand in his resignation.

Ganderrap IV. felt the sudden desire come over him to have him beheaded; in the first impulse of the moment he always forgot Her Britannic Majesty's resident. However, his anger subsided quickly, for, at bottom, he partook of his first minister's repugnance to useless expenditure. But he had given his word, and dreaded to break faith with the tutelary divinity of the kingdom. What was to be done?

It is sometimes permitted to make use of sharp practice when dealing with the immortals; perhaps a way could be found; but what way?

Happily the priest of Chrishna was a man of resources. With his advice, the King sent for Siddhartā.

He did not receive him on the terrace; that place was ill-omened: nor in the interior of the palace; who knows what charms the fakir might cast on its walls? The interview took place in the middle of a lawn in front of the western façade of the palace. The King, who did not wish for a private interview, and who besides wanted witnesses, was surrounded by his ministers, among whom, as soon as he arrived, Siddhartā noticed the author of the conspiracy, the abhorred priest of Chrishna. And it was even he who spoke in the King's name. The entire company were seated in a semicircle, on carpets, on the right and left of his majesty, who sat enthroned on a velvet divan. Siddhartā and Lakshman remained standing.

"Brother," said this last, after a preamble, "the great King finds the request of the Good Mother legitimate and proper. He is ready to fulfill his promise; but as the question of a considerable sum of money is involved, and as the interests of the state are at stake, it has seemed fitting to him to surround himself with all possible guarantees.

* \$500,000.

Now if, as we are assured, the divine Shiva takes this affair in hand himself, means will not be lacking to his messenger to cause himself to be recognized as such."

In speaking these words, Lakshman turned to the ministers who murmured their approbation. He continued:

"The King demands a sign, my brother. Are you prepared to give it?"

Siddhartâ cast a look of disdain on the man who had made himself the instrument of a diabolical machination, and bowing before the King,

"Sire," said he, "I shall do in the name of my master and in his service all that is just and reasonable."

"Very well," replied Lakshman, whose eyes sparkled with joy. "What sign, then, shall we demand of the servant of a great and dreadful God? The Lord Shiva, everybody knows, is the sovereign dispenser of life; he it is who destroys and who constructs, who gives death and who revivifies. Priest of Shiva, the sign that His Majesty demands is that you give up your life. What could be more just and reasonable? If the spouse of Kâli is with you, you can die; he will find the means to resuscitate you. Then His Majesty will be glad to execute his promise."

Lakshman with a graceful but ironical gesture stretched out his hand toward the King, who smiled and said:

"I pledge myself thereto by my kingly word!"

There was a moment of agitation in the assembly. They exchanged glances, passing mutual felicitations in a low voice: but soon the attention of all was fixed on Siddhartâ, whom they looked upon as lost. Strange: now when he knew the conditions imposed by his adversaries he seemed relieved. A smile parted his lips. In the midst of a profound silence, he said to the King:

"Sire, you have sworn; my master has heard you. He shall give the sign you exact. I ask eight days to prepare myself for death."

His assurance was marvelous. Had they a charlatan to deal with, or a fool? A kind of dumb astonishment took possession of the lookers-on. Each of them gazed at the man, trying to fathom his meaning. Lakshman was lost in musing.

"Sire," said he, of a sudden, "the servant of Shiva Tighearna is a man of honor, and none among us doubts that he will come forth triumphant from the test that Your Majesty's wisdom has imposed. But in order that no one may suspect a trick, it is fitting that this test be made in public and under rigorous conditions. If Your Majesty permits" (the King made a gesture of assent), "I shall demand that the tomb of the fakir be dug in this very spot, and that he issue from it only at the end of a month."

The eyes of all were instantly fixed on Siddhartâ; and the King asked him:

"My father, the conditions are severe. Is it in your power to accept them? Be careful what you answer. I declare to you that I shall see to the strict execution of the compact. In this very spot I shall have a grave dug where you will have to pass an entire month. The opening shall be sealed with my seal, and sentinels shall be placed around it to guard it. If you hold to life, you are free to forego the trial. If, haply, you accept the challenge, and Shiva gives you power to issue living from the tomb, not only the ten *lacs* that you have demanded shall be at your service, but we will render you all the honors your soul can desire. Speak; what is your decision?"

A feeling of admiration and pity awoke in the breast of the King. It was plain from the tremulous fervor of his voice that he would have liked to save the fakir. He did not keep them waiting for an answer. Turning alternately toward the King and toward the priest of Chrishna, he expressed himself, with emotion, as follows:

"Sire, it is in the power of the divine Shiva, and of his celestial spouse, to bring to naught the malignity of men. In eight days I shall be here; in your presence I shall enter the mysterious avenues of death, and you shall have me laid in the tomb. What need is there for your seal and guards? Have barley planted on my grave; when it shall have ripened, the priest of the Good Mother will come to bring me back to life, in your presence. I have said."

When he finished speaking, Siddhartâ bowed; then he turned on his heels and walked slowly away without looking behind him.

A tremor ran through the assembly, and every individual sprang up with a bound.

They surrounded the priest of Chrishna and questioned him. He shrugged his shoulders:

"To pretend to issue living from the tomb, after three months, is the idea of an impostor or a fool. In the first case, he will leave the country; in the second, he is a dead man. Believe me, whatever happens, we shall hear no more of the demands of the Good Mother."

The King shook his head, and several of his ministers shook theirs after him. Who knows how far-reaching may be the power of Shiva?

VI.

THE incredible news traveled through the city in a few hours, and caused great excitement. The worshipers of Kālī ran in crowds to the pagoda, bearing presents and asking explanations. Amrah, whom this revival of popularity made twenty years younger, went and came in the sanctuary with a gracious word for each; but if he deigned to accept the presents, on the other hand, he refused all explanation. The fakir was invisible; he was preparing himself in solitude for the great trial. They had to content themselves with offering sacrifices in his favor, and addressing their prayers to the all-powerful deity that she would protect him against the evil spells of the Devil.

The tidings reached the dwelling of Colonel Blake, deputy commissioner of the Queen, at Odhipoor. At first he felt rather embarrassed; he had been directed to respect the religious usages of the people, but to oppose formally any sacrifices of human life, of which the Hindoos were at all times extremely prodigal. Now, Siddhartā was evidently one of those fanatics who would not recoil even before suicide. As for admitting the hypothesis of a resurrection, such an absurdity never entered the Colonel's head. He sent for his physician, Doctor Simpson, and that worthy savant shrugged his shoulders.

"Let them alone," said he; "I believe neither in the death nor resurrection of the fakir. These people understand much better than we the secrets of hypnotism."

The Colonel rejected equally this hypothesis. All the secrets of hypnotism would not bring a man to life again after resting three months in the tomb.

"How do you know?" the doctor replied. "Has it not been proven that even under ordinary conditions men have been able to

support a fast of forty days? It is quite a different thing in the cataleptic state. I saw at Belfast a case of coma where the subject passed two months apparently dead, without swallowing even a drop of beef-tea."

"A case of coma, yes. But here you have a man in full health whom they are going deliberately to put to death, with hasheesh or opium, I suppose."

"Not at all, not at all. He must take his own life. And you may be sure that he has his little receipt, both to kill and resuscitate. There will be neither poison employed nor blood spilt, I promise you. Unless Jesus Christ, no one has passed or will ever pass living from the tomb with a wound six inches deep in his side. In a word, if you wish, I will take the entire responsibility of the affair."

"All right," answered the Colonel. "But I wash my hands of the whole transaction, you know."

On the day agreed upon, toward five o'clock in the evening, the whole city emptied itself into the royal gardens. Ganderap IV., fearing the crowd, had his guards doubled. But the guards were pressed back and overwhelmed. The citizens passed over the walls and through the hedges. The trees were laden down with bronzed and turbaned fruitage. It was impossible to resist the current. They had to be satisfied with keeping free, by means of a cordon of Sepoys, the lawn where the drama was to be enacted.

The entire court was present. The balconies, the roofs on the terrace of the palace, were garnished with fair spectators wrapped in shawls. Colonel Blake, fearing to make himself ridiculous, was not there; but Simpson occupied a seat of honor at the side of the Maharajah. In the center of the lawn a grave had been dug whose inner sides were covered with a coating of stucco a half-inch thick. A frame of masonry formed the top, built around the rim of the grave. The stone slab destined to fit into this frame as a cover for the cavity lay on the ground. An officer of the King's chamber, girded with a blue, gold-tasseled sash, stood ready to seal the tomb with His Majesty's signet.

The rays of the setting sun touching the summits of the date trees shed a glow of blood-red splendor on the walls of the palace. It was the month of October, after the

rains, when the atmosphere possesses an extraordinary transparency, and the lush verdure in all its glory shines as though spread with varnish. The jessamine and orange trees sent forth, in exquisite exhalation, from their millions of flowers abundance of perfume. The paroquets flew hither and thither in hurrying swarms, sparkling in the air like gems. Nature had robed herself in her festal dress to see the fakir die.

A little before six o'clock a movement was seen in the crowd near the gate of entrance. The ranks opened and Siddhartâ appeared accompanied by the priest of Kâli and the young Lalloo. The people cast themselves on their faces along his passage and many enthusiasts pressed their lips to the prints of his feet in the sod. He appeared to see no one; he advanced calm, resolute, all his lineaments breathing serenity and peace, his eyes alone betraying through their glitter the exaltation of his spirit. He made obeisance before the King, and without speaking a word seated himself, cross-legged, on a pall that had been spread near the grave. Profound silence reigned around him. He was seen to draw into his lungs in deep respiration large volumes of air; then he stopped breathing. His gaze was fixed before him. A few minutes passed. Suddenly a trembling seized him, his limbs stiffened, and his gaze became dead and changeless.

Amrah stooped over him. He closed his eyes gently; then he stuffed his nostrils with pledgets of cotton steeped in wax.

"It is done," said he; "the soul of Siddhartâ has taken its flight to Shiva Tighearna."

The doctor approached. "One moment," said he, shortly, seeing that the two priests were about to wrap their companion in the winding-sheet. He raised one of his eyelids and closed it again, felt the pulse, and assured himself that the limbs had taken the rigidity of iron.

The crowd began to murmur; he returned to the Rajah, saying to himself under his breath:

"Just as I thought, a state of catalepsy. But three months! Well, we shall see. It will be interesting, all the same."

When he returned to his place, Amrah and Lalloo drew the cloth over Siddhartâ's head and knotted it firmly. Then, lifting

him like a sack of wheat, they inclosed him in a box which the chamberlain sealed with his signet. At a sign from Amrah, some coolies approached; the box was lowered into the grave, the opening was sealed, the slab covered with earth, and immediately a gardener sowed barley over it, as had been agreed upon.

Then the excitement broke forth. As soon as the Rajah retired to his apartments, the crowd precipitated itself on the lawn; they surrounded the place of sepulture and gave themselves up to delirious cries, exclamations, and invocations to *Shiva Nilechumhashtach* (Omnipotent Shiva). They drew still nearer, falling prostrate and kissing the holy ground. They called on Siddhartâ and improvised then and there religious worship in his honor. Amrah had disappeared, but certain officious persons ran after him, brought him back in triumph and compelled him to consecrate with a libation of oil and with prayer a block of stone torn from an artificial grotto and which they erected at the head of the tomb as an altar. Twenty-four young men volunteered to watch in turn, at the sepulcher, each three hours at a time, until the day of resurrection. And every evening, after the labors of the day were over, artisans, citizens, and husbandmen of the neighborhood assembled there to pass a few moments and to see if the barley had sprouted, adding their prayers to those of their brethren in favor of him who slept under the green covering of the lawn.

The Rajah would have gladly dispensed with the perpetual coming and going through his park; he took care not to witness it. A religious terror took possession of him. Gloomy and preoccupied, he gave himself up to fasting and penance in secret, renouncing his customary recreations. And strange phenomenon, at which he was himself amazed, after having so ardently wished for the eternal disappearance of Siddhartâ with his disagreeable request, he was now desirous of seeing this miracle accomplished, which would cost him at least a million rupees.

Sometimes he descended to the lawn at sunrise and stood contemplating long with dreamy gaze that tiny field of barley whose ears were beginning to turn yellow. Was it possible that under this mantle of verdure a

human being was now reposing who was destined still to play his part on the world's stage? The thought terrified him; and if, peradventure, the breeze of the morning happened to sway the ears, he trembled and fled.

VII.

ABOUT five o'clock of a morning in January the venerable priest of Kâli issued from his cell, looked at the sky that was growing white with the dawn, and yawningly stretched his limbs. His eyes were red and blinking. It could be seen that he had not slept, and the cause of his sleeplessness was that the great day had arrived.

The sacred pigeons, eager for their morning repast, flitted about him, grazing him with their wings. He scattered the flock with a gesture, repulsed the monkey as he came pressing his snout softly into his master's hand, and directed his steps to the bath-room, where he remained a long time engaged in his ablutions. Then he went and aroused the boy, who could easily have slept from morning to evening without any trouble in the world.

"Lalloo," said he, pushing him with his foot, "can you sleep on a day like this?"

Lalloo arose nimbly and gazed with astonishment on the melancholy face of his patron.

"I am ready; what is the matter, father? Is not this the day of our triumph?"

"Of our triumph? Yes, or of our disaster perhaps, who knows?"

"Are you afraid?"

"I am not afraid," interrupted the old man. "I know the Lord is mighty, and your father——"

"My father will triumph!"

"Yes, yes, without doubt. He knew better than anybody what he had to do—only—you see—three months under ground—at least we must scrupulously do our duty. Your father directed us to use water from the spring. Did he give any other directions?"

"We had nothing else to do," answered the young man with importance, "but to take along an amphora of the sacred water and to have a phial of palm-oil to——"

Amrah took his head between his hands. "True, true; I had forgotten the palm-oil. *Bì truagh agad le dho shean-oglach, a Thigh-*

earna!" (Lord, have pity on thy old servant.)

Lalloo brought from the temple a large, narrow-necked vase, which he filled with limpid water, and putting it on his shoulder, said he was ready to start. The old man had already a phial of oil in his hand. And they began their journey without looking behind them.

At the garden gate a pleasant surprise awaited the servants of the pagoda. A chariot to which two oxen were yoked, and covered with a silken canopy, had been sent by the Rajah to convey them over the mile and a half of ground that separated them from the palace. Four officials on horseback were sent to escort them, and the chamberlain was there also pompously stalking behind his heavy mass of chased silver. Several hundreds of the faithful, their arms and necks laden with garlands of flowers, were waiting until the chariot should advance, to follow singing sacred hymns. It was the first-fruits of a triumph. Amrah trembled with joy and terror, his mind divided between the delight of an unprecedented ovation and the fearful doubt that tortured his heart. He seated himself worthily and solemnly on the velvet cushions, with Lalloo on his left, and the procession took its way with measured pace toward the city, a part of whose streets it was necessary to traverse before reaching the palace.

Amrah was astonished to find the streets completely deserted, merely a few old people and children here and there around the wells. This unwonted sight was soon explained to him. When they arrived in the upper portion of the city on the great square where the avenue of date trees begins, that runs in front of the park, the chariot was stopped a long time; the entire population of Odhipoor massed in the neighborhood of the palace had blocked the way. A detachment of mounted guards came up at last, and, pushing back the multitude, made an avenue for the priests of Kâli, who entered the precincts of the royal gardens.

The Rajah was at his post surrounded, as three months before, by his ministers, among whom could be distinguished the priest of Chrishna and the English physician, recognizable at a distance by his big felt helmet.

"Lalloo," said the old priest in a low voice, "do you speak in the name of the

Good Mother ; I feel myself too agitated to speak."

The young man nodded assent, and his confident air, together with the manly expression of his face, showed him equal to the task.

"Sire," said he, in vibrating accents (bowing before the King), "Shiva's hour has sounded ; would Your Majesty please to have opened Siddhartâ's tomb ?"

At a sign from the King, two men armed with silver sickles cut down the plot of barley and deposited the sheaf at the foot of the throne.

Ganderrap IV. then spoke, pointing his hand at the golden ears that littered the ground.

"Whatever," said he, "may be the outcome of this ordeal to which the son of Kâli has submitted, our royal will is that no one ever shall eat of that grain. But if the fakir, Siddhartâ, issues living from the sepulcher in which his remains have lain during three months, I pledge myself to give to the Good Mother a pearl for every one of these ears."

"Sire," answered Lalloo, in his silvery voice that sounded like a clarion, "the produce of the field of death belongs to him who has caused it to sprout from the earth's bosom. The Lord Shiva commands that the grain be distributed among his disciples as the assured pledge of rich harvests. But," added he, stooping to gather some ears, "it is fitting that Your Majesty receive the first fruits of this treasure."

He presented the ears to the King, who took them, trembling, and handed them immediately to his chamberlain. Then the work of the grave-diggers began, and the box was brought to the light of day. The seal was intact. The grave-clothes were untied and Siddhartâ appeared before the eyes of all.

He had preserved the same position with his legs doubled up under him ; only his head was bowed, hanging over on one shoulder. His entire body was wrinkled and dried up, and Dr. Simpson ascertained that there was in this sample of mummified mortality neither perceptible pulse nor heart-beat.

However, Amrah had the sacred water boiled on a chafing-dish ; he poured some of it several times on the fakir's naked skull. Then, assisted by his nephew, he

rubbed the body with a napkin, anointed him with oil and withdrew the plugs of cotton from his nostrils. He separated the rigid jaws and sought with his finger carefully for the tongue, the end of which, folded back, rested on the larynx. The tongue was dry and hard. He rubbed it with oil. Then came the turn of the eyeballs, and these he anointed and moved up and down several times.

A half an hour had passed since he began his ministrations, and thus far no signs of the return of life were perceptible. Lakshman dissimulated his joy with difficulty. Amrah began again his ablutions of warm water and frictions. At last the first manifestations of awakening showed themselves. A tremor passed over the stiffened limbs, the nostrils expanded, the pulse returned. Once more he opened the patient's mouth and lubricated his tongue and palate. A sigh issued from the depths of his bosom—a sigh of immense relief, for Siddhartâ opened his eyes.

The sun had just risen in the distance, behind the rosy hills, and mounted into heaven, chasing before it light, fleecy clouds that vanished in the blue. A gust of wind passed along the crests of the date trees, whose long palm branches waved in honor of the fakir's triumph.

In the crowd assembled around the lawn not a human being stirred ; each one held his breath, waiting to see what would happen.

Siddhartâ had the uncertain gaze of a sleeper who awakes after protracted slumber. He seemed to make an effort to collect his ideas. Then his eyes settled on the Rajah's face, and a smile rippled about the corners of his mouth.

"Sire," said he, in a voice that was but a breath, though everybody heard it, "do you believe in me now ?"

Ganderrap IV., for his only answer, threw himself at the fakir's feet and kissed them repeatedly. The charm was broken ; the aged Amrah, who had supported during that critical hour an extraordinary mental strain, began to sob in a loud voice. The ministers quitted their seats, threw themselves on their faces on the ground, and adored the great divinity in the person of his resuscitated servant, while all the people shouted, wept, and uttered exclamations

of joy. The priest of Chrishna withdrew discreetly.

On the evening of the same day the members of the court and high dignitaries of the realm met together at a banquet in the palace. The British commissioner and his physician were present, but the place of honor had been reserved for Siddhartâ. A robe of silk enveloped his emaciated limbs and he was covered with jewels from head to foot like an idol. He looked tired but contented, and received with innate dignity the homage of which he was the object. Toward the conclusion of the repast the King arose and, opening a casket, drew from it a piece of paper adorned with the royal seal, and laid it at the feet of the fakir. He seized it with trembling hand and devoured it with his eyes. It was an order on the treasury for ten *lacs* of rupees. He slid it quietly between the folds of his girdle, saying, with a smile:

"Believe me, sire, the Good Mother will recompense you."

And that was all.

Before leaving the hall Dr. Simpson found means of having a private conversation with the henceforth all-powerful fakir. After having complimented him warmly on his triumph:

"Tell me," said he, with a sly air, "this is not the first time, is it, that you have passed several weeks in the cataleptic state?"

Siddhartâ did not answer immediately; he looked attentively at the doctor and seemed to reflect.

"It is very possible," said he, finally, "that my Master has ere this caused me to die and resuscitated me. Who knows how many existences I have already passed through, and how many I shall pass through yet before being judged worthy to enter into the Nirvana of God?"

"Oh!" answered the doctor, "I am not speaking of metempsychosis, but of that lethargic sleep into which you had voluntarily plunged yourself. I declare that in the interests of science——"

"Dear doctor," interrupted Siddhartâ, with a candid air, "have you the intention of becoming a disciple of Shiva?"

"No, not exactly; but——"

"Then I have nothing to tell you. There are mysteries to which an adept alone can penetrate."

Simpson could not get any more out of him, and he went away cursing the pedantry that deprived science of so much curious knowledge.

The old pagoda has been torn down, and Amrah does not despair of living long enough to preside at the dedication of the magnificent edifice that is to take its place. The work is being pushed forward actively under the supervision of an English architect. The ten *lacs* of rupees will not be enough, but gifts flow in from all the provinces of the kingdom, and the story goes that Her Britannic Majesty's representative has subscribed a large sum.

MY FRIEND AND MY BOOKS.

BY WILLIAM C. RICHARDS.

I BID my friend, the more that friend I love,
Into my reading-room and by my side,
Glad, if some happy hours he may abide,
Nor he nor I take heed how swift they move:
This is, I wot, true friendship's charm to prove,
When two kinned hearts, in mutual faith allied,
Mingle their thoughts and words in one warm tide,
That flows all doubts and jealousies above!

In fellowship so dear, one fault I own—
Discourtesy to friends, my guests before:
And till *he* came, enough for my delight;
Left now, alas! in disrespectful plight,
And mute, nor with reproachful look or tone,
Prone on their face and tossed upon the floor!



MEPHISTOPHILES AND MARGARET. (AS ACTED BY HENRY IRVING AND ELLEN TERRY.)

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THE PEDIGREE OF THE DEVIL:

TRACED ON THE TERCENTENARY OF MEPHISTOPHILES.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.



LD Philostratus, in his account of the travels of Apollonius and Damis in India, says that the dragons there are hundreds of feet long. The pupils of their eyes are precious stones of preternatural potency. Damis went on a dragon-hunt. They are caught by spreading a magic carpet, on which they are charmed to sleep.

The writer of this article once went on a dragon-hunt in Europe. It had struck me as remarkable that, among the scores of places associated with combats between heroes or saints and dragons, none possessed the relic of any such monster. The dragon was always slain, but the saint's bones alone were shown. At Rome I found, in the church of St. George, the saint's saddle, the flag he bore to his encounter, the very spear he thrust down the dragon's throat; but when I begged to see a bit of the dragon—a bone, a tooth, anything—the sacristan eyed me sharply, locked up the relics, and left me alone. After other failures, I thought I had tracked a dragon to its lair in the south of France. The village of Cimiez was once desolated by a dragon which destroyed the pagan heroes who encountered it, but died peaceably under the exorcism of a Christian hermit; in consequence of this the inhabitants turned their temple of Minerva into a church, beside whose

altar the stuffed dragon was hung up. Having learned on good authority that the monster was still to be seen I made my way to Cimiez. Alas, no dragon was visible! The priests curtly disclaimed knowledge of any such form, but an aged villager told me that the dragon had been removed to Nice ten years before. After a hunt through Nice, which sometimes

threatened to end in one of its asylums, I learned that the dragon was in the college museum. After all I was destined to disappointment. The president of the college informed me that many years before there had been sent from Cimiez a stuffed crocodile, which had been doing duty as a dragon for centuries. Probably little was known of the crocodile on that side of the Mediterranean before the age of steam, but the priests at last became ashamed of their relic and sent it to the college. Only the year before my search, while the museum was being rearranged, this crocodile was no sooner touched than it crumbled to dust,—totally, not a square inch of the skin remaining.

So ended the last of the dragons, as many fabulous forms have ended. They linger in the cloister till increasing light puts them to shame, then they pass to the college, and at the touch of science crumble into dust. Here and there the antiquarian meets a cloudlet of such dragon-dust, as in the Breton's use of the soil of St. Mendez (freed from snakes by the saint of that name) as a vermifuge. But for the most part the dust is spiritualized. In Ireland they insist that the snakes exterminated by Patrick were pagans; though one might suppose the saint would prefer association with the legend than with persecution. From Bunyan to Thackeray imaginative artists have been making the dragon our moral familiar.* But this most universal of mythical forms, now so picturesque, was once a fearful reality. Without abandoning my former opinion ("Demonology," i. 324) that the conventionalized dragon is mainly imaginary, an examination of the unique pterodactyl at Yale College, and the evidence that man was a contemporary of fearful saurians now extinct, incline me to believe that our hero-and-dragon legend—currency of the human race—originated in the struggle of primitive man with the monsters which disputed his entrance on the planet. The strata beneath our feet are successive cemeteries of extinct

racés. From their immemorial struggles, of organic with inorganic forces, higher against lower organization, was developed man, the sum of every creature's best, and his phantasmal foe, the dragon, sum of every creature's worst. Inorganic ferocities—lightning, tempest, flood, drought, malaria, swamp, volcano,—gained composite incarnation in this fabulous form with horn, talon, sting, fang, poisonous breath, fiery vomit, impenetrable scales, eye sharp to spy, wing swift to pursue. These monsters which, in earliest myths, gods slew with difficulty, were later subdued by demi-gods, then by heroes, and finally succumbed to the hermit's bell and candle. The dragon's decline marked man's successive conquests of nature. There follows a further step: the dragon, instead of being slain, is domesticated, utilized; he is guardian of Hesperian gardens, helpful ally of Uther Pendragon, familiar of popes, protector of thrones. The north wind was anciently demonized under the name of Eagre (whence Ogre), fundamentally related to Ahi (the great Vedic serpent). But the time came when the Northman could sing, as in Emerson's quatrain:

"The gale that wrecked you on the sand,
It taught my rowers to row;
The storm is my best galley-hand,
And guides me where I go."

This was the crumbling of the dragon as a demon, though he lingered long after as symbol, emblem, and finally as fable.

The dragon was succeeded by the anti-social devil. By co-operation men, separately naked and helpless amid the huge ferocities around them, had so far subdued and utilized those natural forces that they might be fabled to have slain some dragons and domesticated others. But this co-operation, by which the victory could alone be maintained, was not yet the social organism. Man's early efforts to form society were liable to defeat by individual greed, selfishness, treachery, ambition, lust. The elemental dragon thus fabled an anti-social monster.† It was animalism taking possession of human form to rend

* The Babylon chapter in Thackeray's "Pendennis," with its quaint initial picture by the author, will be remembered. Bayard Taylor told me that once, when he and Thackeray were leaving Marochetti's studio, where they had seen a group of "St. George and the Dragon," Thackeray said: "Every man has his dragon. Mine is a dinner-party—what's yours?" "That's mine too," said Taylor.

† The Nez Percés Indians are said to have a fable of an enormous monster which swallowed up all other animals. These animals continued their war on each other in the monster's belly until one of their number suggested that they should rather combine; this they did and made their way through the monster, which was thus destroyed. Had they continued their co-operation afterward human society would have been anticipated.



HINDU PICTURE OF THE DEVIL, "RAVANA."

Ravana in disguise as a monk asking alms of Sita.

humanity. The demon, passing to his fossil-bed, had bequeathed the germ of a devil. The dragon and the demon were hideous, for their aim was to terrify and harm the body; the devil was beautiful, for his aim was to seduce. He would help the body in order to harm the soul. But such malevolence must be his motive; if impelled by hunger or love he is a demon, or at worst a demi-devil.

This pre-scientific science was marvelously exact and complete. As every animal in its embryonal development repeats the specific forms which preceded it in the earth,—crab being trilobite and shrimp before it is born a crab,—so each supreme devil may be tracked in its evolution from the inorganic to the brutal, and from this to the human form. Thus Mephistophiles (so it should be spelt), who made his first appearance in England three centuries ago (early in 1588), is described in that early "Faust" book as answering the scholar's summons with a frightful thunder-storm. Then the inorganic becomes quasi-organic. "Then fell the devil to roar, as if the whole wood had been full of lions." Then the chaotic powers combine. "Over his [Faust's] head hung hovering in the air a mighty dragon." From this dragon fell "a flame in manner of lightning and

changed itself into a globe." This dragon-egg "opened and sprung up in the height of a man, so burning a time, in the end it converted to the shape of a fiery man. This pleasant beast ran about the circle a great while, and lastly appeared in the manner of a Gray Friar, asking Faustus what was his request."

Subtle art is shown in the "Volksbuch" (Johann Spiess, Frankfurt, 1587), which the English version followed in giving the devil his Franciscan shape. The anonymous (Protestant) author, writing in the era of the Reformation, appealed to

a mixed public: the Catholic could recognize the homage paid by the devil to his saintly garb, the Protestant might boast that the fiend was a papist; while the evils typified by Mephistophiles were those dreaded alike by both parties. This composite sixteenth-century devil is the shadow of that thought and science which Luther had conjured up, but before which he trembled as much as the pope. The state, the social order, rested on ecclesiastical foundations for the one, on biblical and sacramental foundations for the other; fearless searchers into nature, ready even to experiment with methods of wizards, were regarded by both as systematic anarchists. The devil they dread is an anti-social tempter, who will substitute lust for love, fornication for marriage; as a seducer he must have a holy disguise and appear to reverence the prejudices he means to undermine. It is in obedience to Faust's desire that his devil wears the Franciscan dress, until the victim's transition from



HINDU PICTURE OF RAVANA AT HOME.

the cloister to the epicurean life is complete. Goethe's "cultured" Mephistophiles lecturing on theology, with soundest orthodoxy, corresponds with devils of other races. In an ancient puranic legend the ten-headed demi-devil Ravana changed himself to an ascetic "fakir" when he carried off Sita, the wife of the hero Rama, while she was piously offering him alms.

The devil, as is well known, tempted St. Anthony in the form of a lean monk. Besides the obvious motive for this sanctified appearance, that of the wolf in sheep's clothing, there are historical reasons for the correspondence between the infernal and celestial forms and their kingdoms. Systems of superstition are developed in hostility to each other; each looks on the other as its adversary, and on its chief deity as arch-adversary of the true deity. And yet these various systems necessarily correspond to each other in many features, like the crania of the different races they represent; and in certain lines of evolution, where one religion has anciently originated from the other, the correspondence is so close that one is apt to charge the other with plagiarism. St. Augustine, in view of the heathen sacraments, said, "Satan is God's ape." It is related of Theodore Parker, that once, when a Calvinist tried to convert him by terrors of eternal torment, the famous preacher quietly answered: "The difference between us may be briefly stated: your God is my devil." The remark is a sort of "chestnut" in theological history. The Aryans of India turned the aboriginal pantheon into a pandemonium; their own deities being diabolized in turn by the Persians. Christianity never denied the existence of Greek, Roman, and Teutonic deities, but declared them devils. The Christian Gnostics turned the Jewish Jehovah into an arch-fiend (Ildabaoth), and it became a widely prevalent belief that Jesus, by his death and descent into hell, had ransomed mankind from their dark and evil tyrant. In this way each new religion which invades or converts a people is poured into the mold of their preceding system. The old gods and goddesses are not destroyed but generally degraded. Such of them as have been trusted and beloved by the people,—as Minerva, Aphrodite, Bertha,—are christened into saints, who wear, as mantles, the pretty



SATAN, FROM AN EASTERN CAMEO.

legends told of earlier goddesses. "Lady's Slipper," "Lady's Smock," and other flowers passed from Bertha to "Our Lady." On the other hand the sterner nature-gods fill the Inferno of the new faith. Two rival kingdoms are thus established. The priest of the new and supreme religion is under a special covenant with the divine kingdom; he is supposed to be intrusted with miraculous powers; he can exorcise and control the opposing demons. The infernal adversary is therefore particularly anxious to tempt a priest over to his side. A devout Job, a doctor of divinity, like Faustus, are great prizes. For this reason, among others, orgies of the demons followed the once sacred Bacchanalia, Saturnalia, and Yule revelries. The imaginary gatherings of witches were termed "Sabbaths," because the Jews, compelled by terror to meet in secret, were believed to practice infernal rites and sacrifice Christian infants. The Huguenots (also driven to secret assemblies) probably gained their name from the forest-demon, Hugo, who was supposed to meet with them and receive their allegiance. The fact that those Protestants received women as members and helpers led to the belief that their meetings were licentious. This was in ac-

cordance with the prevailing belief that the incursions of Satan were in the form of some rival religious movement, and that he was largely dependent on apostate priests, who could transfer to him the mighty sacramental forces. In Wagner's "Parsifal," evil Kling-soor aims to get the Sangreal, the chalice of Christ's blood, with which to rule the world. Who, indeed, was Satan himself but a fallen

minister of heaven, bringing its sacred fruit that may make men as gods.

In the fifteenth century, Master John Petit, professor of theology at Paris, justified the assassination of the Duke of Orleans on the ground that he had conspired against the king's life by sorcery. The professor declared the duke's agent to be an apostate monk who, in the remote tower of Montjay,

invoked the devil, —generally on Sunday. Once, on a mountain, this wicked priest, according to the omniscient professor, set the Duke's sword and seal on the earth, kneeled, naked, and invoked the devil. Two dark green demons at once appeared, and the monk worshiped them. They vanished with the seal and weapons, but presently returned, and gave the apostate the seal, now of red color. "Thou wilt put it into the mouth of a dead man, in the way thou knowest." Thus a new faith, however righteous, is necessarily for a time confused with immorality. This conflict between the established religious order obviously involves both social and political forces. I have read an unpublished essay by Carlyle, in which he says that Milton embodied in his Satan the genius of English



ENTERING THE JAPANESE ARCH-DEMON
LEAVING HIS RETINUES



revolution. Milton sympathizes with the Satan of "Paradise Lost," and it is only in his "Paradise Regained,"—in some respects superior to the other poem,—that we find the poet's real opinion of a devil. That opinion is expressed toward Belial and other devils, and—a curious confirmation of Carlyle—contemptuously flung at them by Satan himself, who tells them they can not appreciate the pure and lofty character (Jesus) they have to deal with. The insubordinate leader, the revolutionist, the idealist, the reformer, the rebel against conventional morality, the socialist, all have charms for the young imagination. The captive beauty in her grim old lord's castle meets her lover in the moonlight without care for the unnatural ceremony which has parted them. The hero discards the baptismal covenant which supports a political despotism. From these come the spiritual pigments which give beauty and majesty to the chief devil of most races. As seducers they can not be repulsive; they must be fascinating. If any ethnical devil, like the Japanese Yemma, be ugly, it is because he is some representative of ferocious nature promoted to a position for which he was not originally intended. In this case the repulsive devil is apt to be represented in seductions by a temptress,—as Samaël by Lilith. As a rule, the evil chieftain is handsome. The ten heads of Ravana were all handsome, though his diabolical subjects were hideous, as will be noticed in the illustrations. So was Satan, the Eastern conception of whom is preserved for us on an ancient gem; he is a genius of severe beauty, winged, carrying a lamp to detect, and instruments of graduated retribution. Tchornibog, Slavonic God of Darkness (model for the Satan of Russian mural pictures) has a majestic appearance. Indeed, the personal appearance of an ethnical devil is a sort of measure of civilization. The phantasms haunting barbarians are ugly because they are rather demons than devils; that is, they are personifications of external and physical forces and ferocities with which the barbarian is still contending. It is only when a race has to a considerable extent

mastered such forces by skill, and discovered their impersonality by intelligence, that it awakens to the social dangers and moral illusions which take on tempting forms.*

In a strict sense, therefore, a devil is the shadow of man's moral nature. A few years ago I witnessed at Vienna a sublime performance of the "Prologue in Heaven," from Goethe's "Faust." On the radiant curve of the world stood the three archangels in dazzling raiment, uttering before the unseen Lord their tribute to the universe:

"Mysterious all, yet all is good,
All fair as at the birth of Light."

No sooner ceases the optimist chorus than the pessimist shadow steals up from beneath on the shining sphere, which is half-covered with the black-winged shape and silhouette of a cynical face. The two supreme presences are visible only in the radiance from one and shadow from the other; their voices are heard, deep answering deep; light responds without wrath to the challenge of darkness. No threat is interchanged; no angel asks why the source of evil is not destroyed. That question, alas, had been asked and never answered through immemorial ages, until it had finally died away from the lips of hope and faith.

Whence came that shadow? "Nature impales men," says Mill, "breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nero or a Domitian never surpassed." Here is the protoplasm of dragons and demons, long supposed to be waging war against a kindly Power revealed in the beautiful and friendly aspects of nature. On that demonic shadow every race has looked, and their independent explanations correspond so nearly that a few typical examples may suffice us.

And, first, the physical adversary—the demon. The American Indians and the Japanese, before the former were influenced by

* Some of the Christian Fathers fulfilled the logic of the idea by representing Satan's antagonist, Christ, as ugly. St. Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian described Christ as undersized and of ugly countenance. In Dr. Brinton's book on "The Religious Sentiment,"

there is a striking chapter on the Religion of Beauty, in which it is shown that this Christian preference for uncomeliness was in antagonism to the beautiful Greek gods; diabolized by Christianity.



A MEDIEVAL PORTRAIT OF THE DEVIL.

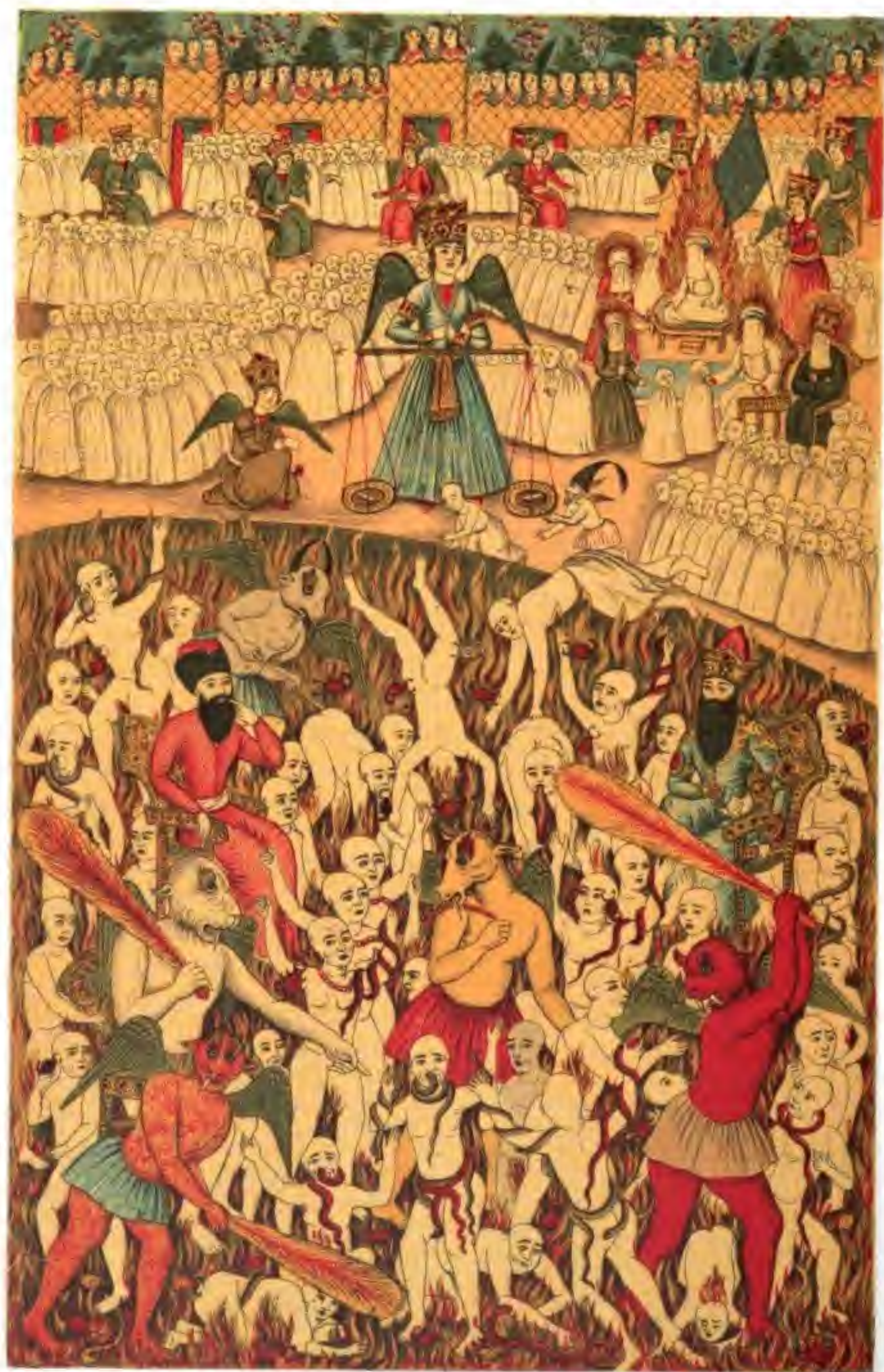
Christianity and the latter by Buddhism, had demons without ethical significance. The beneficent and the fatal aspects of nature were in America represented by twins,—the White One and the Dark One (Ioskeha and Tawiscara, among the Iroquois); the Beautiful One and the Ugly One (Enigorio and Enigohahetgea, among the Tuscaroras). In Japan, the ancient mythology represented in the primal paradise (Ama-tevasu, "shining heaven") a sister and brother, Omi-kami and Sosano. Although this brother did brave things, he was fierce and warlike; one of his disturbances so frightened his sister that she hid herself. Thereon a darkness fell on the earth, under which were bred all evil forms; these did not disappear even after Sosano repented and fair Omi-kami ("great goddess") returned. The demons born in her absence were given their abode Yomotsu-no-kuni (Land of Night), while the Sister

and Brother dwell in the Shining Heaven. The dark brood are called Oni; their Chief is Yemma, an importation from India, where Yama is the God of Death. Yemma was not particularly handsome unless one gauges beauty by Japanese ideals, as the accompanying portrait shows, where he leads a torch-light procession through the dark regions of mid-air. The exaltation of the (morally) Good Mind in the deification of Buddha degraded this King of Terrors into a Devil.* The corresponding evolution in America is stated by Brinton. "The version given by the Tuscarora chief, Cusic, in 1825, relates that in the beginning of things there were two brothers, Enigorio and Enigohahetgea, names literally meaning the Good Mind and the Bad Mind (or more exactly, the Beautiful Spirit, the Ugly Spirit). The former went about the world furnishing it with gentle streams, fertile plains, and plentiful fruits, while the latter maliciously followed him creating rapids, thorns, and deserts. At length the Good Mind turned upon his brother in anger and crushed him into the earth. He sank out of sight in its depths, but not to perish, for in the dark realms of the underworld he still lives, receiving the souls of the dead and being the author of all evil. Now when we compare this with the version of the same legend given by Father

Brebeuf, missionary to the Hurons in 1636, we find its whole complexion altered; the moral dualism vanishes; the names Good Mind and Bad Mind do not appear; it is the struggle of Ioskeha, the White One, with his brother Tawiscara, the Dark One, and we at once perceive that Christian influence in the course of two centuries had given the tale a meaning foreign to its original intent."

The ethical embryology of the Devil, as a general type, is represented in these fables, which must be regarded not as mere fancies, but as the essays of primitive man. The evolution of the evil personification, thus originated, is historically traceable. The dark-winged form of Mephistophiles, half eclipsing the radiant world, may be archæo-

* I am indebted to Mr. Tatui Baba, a learned Japanese now in this country, for guidance in the labyrinth of his country's demonology.



THE LAST JUDGMENT, FROM A PERSIAN LACQUER PAINTING.

logically distributed among races and their religions, whose conceptions are cumulatively summed in him.

In India the great serpent Ahi (whence our word "adder"), and the dragon Vritra, who caused drouth and physical evils, being therefore mere demons, were succeeded by the demi-devil, Ravana. He is described in the Ramayana as having ten heads, twenty arms, copper-colored eyes, and bright teeth like the young moon. He was a breaker of all laws, especially a ravisher. Like Satan he is of celestial origin, and even in his lapse so potent, by reason of former sanctity, that he made each of the gods perform some menial office for him. He bore on his great form the scars of India's thunderbolt and Vishnu's discus, but reigned on still until Vishnu became incarnate as Rama, by whom the royal Devil was slain. The Singhalese demons (Rakshasas), over whom Ravana reigned, remained, and are still dreaded (under name of Bhuts in India), but they had to wait for a long time for another chief. This was Mara, originally the Hindu Cupid, who, when Buddha preached the evil of existence, naturally (as the god of reproduction) became the Adversary. Buddha believed in no deity or devil; the universe he declared without beginning, destined to be without end; it was entirely bad, and the only salvation of man was to escape not merely from the earth, but from existence altogether. On this purely negative foundation Buddhism has built up a system in which the Hindu deities survive as angels, helpful or mischievous, Mara being its Satan and Buddha its Christ. Nirvana, however, still retains for a large proportion of Buddhists its original significance,—a realm of unconsciousness,—conscious immortality being for the bad, who will be punished by automatic torturers formed from their own evil desires. The Buddhist solution of the problem of evil is purely pessimistic. Nature is essentially bad; any appearance of good in it is an illusion which, if pursued, leads from bad to worse.

In ancient Persia, Zoroaster reached a conception of the moral universe which, apart from its mythological expression, prevails in the civilized world of to-day. He believed in one god only, purely good, Ormuzd, which means the Good Mind. The supreme adversary of this Good Mind, Ahriman, was

developed at a later period, not out of Zoroaster's religion, but out of his scientific theory of nature. He supposes two originating causes of all phenomena,—*gaya* and *ajyaiti*; which, Max Müller tells me, mean, strictly, "living" and "not living." (The idea would correspond closely with our modern dualism of organic and inorganic.) The two primeval causes united to produce the universe and are both represented in every part of it. They are twins. They make the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in every man. They make the Good Mind and the Evil Mind in the universe,—Ormuzd and Ahriman. But the personification of the latter as a conscious being was not a legitimate deduction from the "not living" cause to which the great Zoroaster traced evil phenomena. To him good was living, intelligent, purposing; but evil was inorganic, chaotic, unconscious. Among Zoroaster's followers his metaphysics proved too much for his monotheism. Out of his "not living" cause was developed Ahriman, the dark peer of Ormuzd, the Good; that evil potentate drew into his phantasmal breast all the ghosts of departed demons and devils, combined them in one great archetype of evil, and became the very ancestor and patriarch of the diabolical forms which have since haunted the human imagination.

This, then, was the second solution of the problem of evil. India had decided that evil is supreme in the universe. Persia concluded that evil was equal to good. The battle between God and Devil is drawn. By a compromise they are to reign alternately, six thousand years each, without exactly destroying each other's thrones. It need hardly be added that Ahriman is supposed to be at present having his "innings." The later Parsé faith has tended toward "Universalism."

The unique picture of the "Last Judgment"—brought from Persia by the late Sir John Pennyfather, R. N., from whose collection it was purchased by the writer—is a Parsé conception somewhat influenced by Islamism. The handsome crowned potentate in hell is the only pictorial representation of Ahriman which I have been able to discover. The other uncrowned dignitary in the pit may be identified as Aeshma (Asmodeus), by his rose-colored dress, which is that of the Oriental god of love, Mara, whom Buddhism, as we have seen, had diabolized. It is this

premier of Ahriman from whom Mephistophiles is lineally descended. The name Aeshma means "burning desire." He was a sort of Cupid grown into a gay, handsome, dainty devil,—so dainty that, in the book of Tobit, he fled to Egypt to escape a bad smell. As cruelty and "burning desire" are nearly related he slays the seven successive husbands of his inamorata. He was a gay Lothario among Solomon's wives, after imprisoning the wise man by means of his own magic seal-ring. His appearance in Europe under the name of Mephistophiles is a curious variant, resulting from his confusion with the mediæval devil; for Mephistophiles seems to mean a lover of bad smells (*i. e.*, sulphur), whereas the Asmodeus of Tobit fled from a bad smell. His appearance in Shakespeare ("Lear," iii., 4 sc.) is remarkable.

"The prince of darkness is a gentleman;
Modo he's called."

In Shakespeare's time (1585-6) a Jesuit named Weston went about England exorcising devils from lunatics, and the story grew that he dispossessed a fashionable youth named Mainie of a devil who called himself "Modu" (abbreviation of Asmodeus). From the trial which ensued it appears that Modu's identity discovered itself by causing the young gentleman to curl his hair carefully, to dally with pretty servant girls, and to meditate killing the king. "The prince of darkness is a gentleman" had therefore a special significance when written. It will be observed that this excitement nearly coincided in time with the appearance of the first English "Faust" book (1588). In this, however, Asmodeus' amorous propensities are transferred to Faustus, who enjoys himself in the Grand Turk's harem, in disguise of Mahomet, as Asmodeus did in Solomon's harem under disguise of the wise king. No such figure as Margaret appears in the old story. That is the matchless creation of Goethe. But before this later evolution of the Devil could take place a new spiritual revolution had to occur, and the new moral world it produced must be briefly surveyed.

The Hebrew exaltation of Jehovah above all gods would not permit any equal power in the universe. Their figure corresponding to Ahriman, Satan, could act only by per-

mission of the Creator. Beneath that heavenly and cosmic supremacy, however, a certain equality was admitted in the terrestrial conflict. In our Persian picture the respective agents of Ormuzd and Ahriman are seen; the one has deposited in the balance a soul's record of good deeds, the other a record of its evil. These appear in Jewish belief as the Accuser (Samaël) and the Defender (Michael). Similar conceptions prevailed among the early judaizing Christians who imagined a satanic Judas beside Jesus, an anti-Christ resisting Christ. At the present day it is possible to find regions in the New World as well as the Old where children are taught that each is attended by a White and a Dark Spirit, one of which records its good, the other its evil actions. It is only within our own time that law has interfered with the old German custom of making Christmas a judgment-day in the home, when Santa Claus and his ill-favored attendant, Clabouf, masqueraded, the one giving gifts to the good children, the other reciting the deeds of the naughty, and threatening to take them off in his pannier,—sometimes with melancholy results.

Max Müller has told the curious story of how Buddha was unwittingly canonized in Christendom as St. Barlaam and Josaphat. In the neighborhood of his birth Buddha was turned by tradition into a powerful demon, who is even now only kept from rising again and desolating the district by contributions of the orthodox (Brahmans). Such are the vicissitudes through which not only prophets but deities must pass! It would have amazed many of the early Christians had they realized how many of their doctrines were unknown to Jesus, but well known to Zoroaster and to Buddha. The earth was described as a vale of tears, a wilderness of woe, in the very phrases of Buddha, and the Prince of this World was declared to be just what the Parsi had said. The kingdom of the good power was yet to come. But even when it should arrive the evil power was not to be destroyed; he was only to be chained up for a season. The infernal kingdom was to be co-eternal with that of his divine opponent. But while accepting the Buddhist doctrine that nature was altogether evil, and that the only escape was through the portals of the grave, the humble Christian substituted for unconscious Nirvana the hope of a



IRVING AS MEPHISTOPHELES IN THE STORM OF WALPURGIS NIGHT.

conscious future bliss. The Zoroastrian dualism was so complete in the Eastern Church that the sacred walls were covered with pictures, some of which remain, representing a trinity of infernal powers,—a majestic Satan, with his son between his knees, the serpent answering to the dove. This son is said to be Judas, but more probably it is Antichrist. In Europe, the great struggle between Christ and Antichrist for the possession of the world was confidently anticipated at the end of a thousand years. The poor, the serfs, bore their sufferings patiently in view of the day when the proud should be humbled and the lowly set on thrones; but when the year one thousand passed quietly these humble

ones awakened to the fact that their allied Church-and-State rulers were enjoying all that plenty and pomp which were said to be Satan's gifts to his favorites. They had not yet a Bible to read, could they have read it; they only knew so much of it as was read to them, or as might be derived from miracle-plays and church pictures. The popular Christianity was largely folklore. When, at the end of a thousand years, Christ did not appear, nor work any transformation scene, a sort of despair fell on the wretched masses, and they began to consider the possibilities of an appeal to Antichrist. They had been taught that their old deities were devils; but traditions described some beings worshiped by their ancestors as friendly and helpful to the poor, and there was now an effort to recall them. This gave rise to the phenomena of witchcraft. Perhaps Faust, and other men of science associated with the "black art," were only a skeptical Seybert Committee investigating the mediums and pretended marvels of their time. At this time the invisible prince associated with the pride of life, and the world's pomp and glory, was in the ascendant; "good devil!" was a more frequent ejaculation than "good Lord!" And this conglomerate of Eastern, Roman, and Teutonic folklore was a popular

theology till the Bible was translated and printed.

Notwithstanding testimonies to its truth, the story that Luther was visited by the Devil, while translating the Bible, and threw his inkstand at him, seems like a sophisticated myth. But the inkspot on the wall is still shown, fresh as if made yesterday—as perhaps it was. It is probable that while at such work in the Wartburg Luther for the first time discovered that this devil, this majestic Ahriman, popularly believed to be Jehovah's rival and Prince of the World, was declared in the Old Testament a mere subordinate, and in the New Testament a fallen angel expelled from

heaven. It was something like a second fall when this shrunken satanic majesty appeared in Luther's vision, only to be treated with scorn. Luther's inkstand did not kill the devil, but it spattered him over, so to say, and he has been declining ever since in popular respect. A ludicrous "Old Nick" took his place. The churches became ashamed of the devil. King James' translators dropped him out of the Lord's Prayer, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism mentioned him but once. So it went on until, a few years ago, the devil was legally degraded in England. An old-fashioned clergyman who had refused the communion to a parishioner who denied the devil's existence was compelled to administer that sacrament to the skeptic.* About the same time the eternity of punishment was implicitly declared no part of the Anglican creed. The late Lord Westbury's epitaph was written by a wag of the Inner Temple: "He non-suited the Devil, and dismissed Hell with costs." It would appear that the English Bench had done its best to fulfill Man Friday's expectation as expressed to Crusoe: "Why not God kill Debbil?"

Yes, this naturalistic devil was dead. Astronomy saw him not in Saturn; meteorology dethroned him as prince of the air; exploration cleared him from the wastes of land and sea. But meantime, amid the spiritual degradations and moral desolations of the world, and their sources in the human heart, the dread apparition of a nineteenth-century devil has appeared. The poet followed the theologian, and in the great drama of "Faust" reveals a Mephistophiles of modern culture,—the refined, polished, most developed type of selfishness. This genius of heartlessness, revealed by Goethe, is related to past forms. This is shown in the powerful impersonation of Henry Irving, who has brought out all the dramatic elements of the poem by the most scholarly studies of the whole moral and mythological habitat of our modern devil. The horns reappear in his curving feathers; the infernal flame—thrice shading from the crimson beneath to the lighter cap, like an

ascending tongue of fire—typifies the "burning desire;" his limp remembers the severe fall out of heaven. The additions made in this play to Goethe's drama may be criticised by the literalist, but they are all valuable. Thus, in the added garden scene, the casting of his crimson skirt on Margaret (the scene reproduced in the frontispiece) reminds one of how from a sacred form virtue passed by the hem of a garment, as now the evil one would fain transmit vice; and this foreshadows the power which the maiden wields by lifting over incarnate selfishness the symbol of self-sacrifice—the cross. Another exquisite touch of Irving's Mephistophiles is his writhing pain under the chimes. In mediæval lore the devil, being a demon of disorder, is especially at home in the air; his joy is in the shrieking storm of the Hartz Mountains, where "the boisterous guests" gather for Walpurgis' night orgies; but where the air is pervaded by sacred sound of church bells the prince of the air is expelled. It is probable that the howling of dogs under the sound of bells partly suggested their demoniac character; the writhing of Mephistophiles, who came out of a dog, being thus a touch which would have delighted Goethe—who had an antipathy to dogs.† Again, in the cavernous witch's kitchen, to which Mephistophiles conveys Faust for the magic draught which shall restore his youth, one sees the mediæval ideas of the devil and his favorites wrought into grotesque reality. While the witch is stewing for her master the potent cup, with weird incantations, assisted by her monkey slaves, the liveliest imps amuse Faust and his red comrade by tossing and rolling a ball which Faust learns is the world. The weird dance of demons is also significant. Though now an amusement, dancing was originally, as now in India, a sacred rite; as such it occurred in the recurrence of heathen celebrations, which gave rise to the "witch" mythology; and it survived in the hysterical dances of the nuns—as those of Loudou (1634), ascribed to the black arts of the priest Grandier. These are some of the artistic refinements of the antiquarian frame

* Some scandal was lately caused when, on the suit of a Hindu for the price of an exorcism, it was pointed out in the Calcutta Court that "exorcism" is still provided for in a rubric of the English Church.

† Around Rose Hill, in Charles County, Maryland—residence of the writer's maternal ancestors—it is said a

Blue Dog with phosphorescent eyes sometimes prowls, and announces an approaching death by howling. This is probably a descendant of Cerberus, his color being derived from the sulphurous flame added to Hades since Cerberus' time.

with which Mr. Irving has surrounded a devil so modern that he becomes a familiar of the spectator. One is reminded of Heine, who says he once evoked the devil, who came, and he found that he had previously met him at diplomatic receptions in Paris. The polite cynicism of Mephistophiles is all the more realistic by the side of the exquisite simplicity, the

translucent innocency and loveliness of Miss Terry's Margaret. Goethe should have lived to see her shudder in the atmosphere left by Mephistophiles in her bedroom, and the marguerite tenderly twined on her little crucifix. That face uplifted to the stone Virgin, that tortured heart offering its unanswered flowers, and the last look and cry of agony before she is enveloped in darkness, must



MEPHISTOPHELES AND MARGARET
IN THE WITCH'S KITCHEN.

remain with those who witnessed them unsurpassed visions of beauty and expressions of pathos.

It is probable that only in this poetic and artistic form can the devil find a habitat in the cultured modern world. John Stuart Mill did, indeed, wonder that the ancient Persian theory of an eternal struggle between Ormuzd and Ahriman was not revived; and

there have not been wanting signs of an effort in this direction. The revisors have restored "the evil one" in the Lord's Prayer. Last year (1887) two powerful books appeared in England, from authors emancipated from traditional beliefs, demanding reconsideration of the modern repudiation of belief in an evil principle. One of these, "The Kernel and the Husk," maintains that belief in Satan is necessary to disburden the Deity of responsibility for evil. It is by Dr. Abbott, a Broad Church divine; and, curiously enough, the book containing this defense of Satan has brought him into trouble for heresy! The other book is a learned and powerful treatise entitled, "A Modern Zoroastrian," by Samuel Laing, M. P.,—a very able writer on science and religious philosophy, who has definitely embraced the essential Persian dualism. Neither of these writers, however, ascribes to the forces that "make for evil" that malicious consciousness and purpose which gave the earlier brood of Ahriman their reign of terror. The apparent revival of dualism is but the recognition, in a time of increasing human sympathy, of the fact that inorganic nature, and the brutalities acting inorganically (in man and beast), are indifferent to the moral law and to the social need of humanity.

Nothing is evil except as measured by the human standard. The venomous serpent ceases to be evil when it becomes a subject of scientific study. A cow tramples a city of ants; the ants, if they have a theology, may describe the peaceful animal as a cruel monster seeking whom it may crush; and we ants of a larger growth may describe as malicious monsters forces which have no relation to our human need, or consciousness of our existence. It is the mission of man to humanize the forces around him. This he can hardly do if he patiently submits to evil conditions as providential, or, on the other hand, if he shall combat the non-human elements as if they were conscious adversaries. And this is equally applicable to the inward conflict, where evils once ascribed to diabolical possession are recognized by science as largely the results of morbid conditions, of hunger and disease, and of unfiltered blood biasing the brain. The Greeks pictured Apollo slaying the Python unerringly, because so calmly; the civilized man, with the calmness of science and gentleness of art, will subdue the inorganic chaos which obstructs humanity; and equally the chaotic energies of animalism in man, whose ferocity was so long left without restraint because attributed to a preternatural power with which man had no means of contending.





AN EGYPTIAN BARGE OF ROSES.

Painted by George Wharton Edwards.

THE EXECUTIONER.

BY HONORE DE BALZAC.

THE clock in the steeple of the little church in the city of Menda had just struck twelve midnight. At that moment a young French officer, leaning upon the wall of a long terrace that bordered the gardens of the chateau of Menda, appeared to be plunged in meditation more profound than is consistent with the carelessness of a military life.

But it must be admitted that never were hour, place, and night more favorable for reflection. A beautiful Spanish sky made an azure dome above his head. The twinkling stars and the soft moonlight illumined an enchanting valley that spread itself coquettishly at his feet.

Leaning against an orange-tree in blossom, the chief of battalion could see, a hundred feet below him, the city of Menda, which seemed to have sheltered itself from the north winds at the foot of the rock on which the chateau was built. Turning his head, he saw the sea, whose sparkling waters framed the landscape with a wide silver band. The chateau was illuminated. The joyous tumult of a ball, the strains of an orchestra, the laugh of officers and their partners reached him, mingled with the distant murmur of the waves. Fatigued by the heat of the day, he felt inspired with energy by the freshness of the night. And finally, the gardens were planted with trees so fragrant and flowers so sweet that the young man found himself as if plunged in a perfumed bath.

The chateau of Menda belonged to a Spanish grandee, who at this moment dwelt in it with his family. During the whole evening the elder of the daughters had regarded the officer with an interest so full of sadness that the sentiment of compassion expressed by the Spanish girl might well cause the Frenchman's reverie.

Clara was beautiful, and although she had three brothers and one sister, the possessions of the Marquis of Léganès appeared to be sufficiently large to inspire the belief in Victor Marchand that the young woman would have a rich wedding portion.

But how could he think that the daughter of the man that was most conscious of his own greatness in all Spain would be given to the son of a Paris grocer? Moreover, the French were hated. The Marquis, having been suspected by Gen. G—t—r, who ruled the province, of plotting an uprising in favor of Ferdinand VII., the battalion commanded by Victor Marchand had been quartered in the village of Menda in order to hold in check the surrounding country, which was under the rule of Marquis de Léganès.

A recent dispatch from Marshal Ney had created a fear that the English might shortly disembark on that coast, and designated the Marquis as a man that held communication with the cabinet council in London. Thus, notwithstanding the cordiality with which Victor Marchand and his soldiers had been received by the Spaniard, the young officer was constantly on his guard.

In turning his steps toward this terrace, from whence he examined the condition of the town and the country confided to his surveillance, he asked himself how to interpret the friendship that the Marquis had not ceased to show him, and how the tranquillity of that region was to be reconciled with the uneasiness of his general.

But for a moment these thoughts had been driven from the mind of the young commander by a sentiment of prudence and by a legitimate curiosity. He had just perceived a large number of lights in the town. Notwithstanding the festival of St. John's, he had given orders that every morning all the lights should be extinguished at the hour prescribed in his regulations. The chateau alone had been exempted from obeying this order. He saw the glitter of his soldiers' bayonets here and there; but a solemn silence lay over all, and there were no indications that the Spaniards had delivered themselves up to intoxication by reason of the festival.

After having sought to explain to himself this infraction of his orders, by which the inhabitants of the city had rendered them-

selves liable, he found this fault the more inexplicable as he had left the night police in charge of his officers. With the impetuosity of youth, he hastened out through a breach in the rampart in order to descend the rocks precipitately, and thus reach a small post near the entrance of the town more quickly than he could by the usual road. He suddenly stopped in his course, thinking he heard the sand in the walks near the chateau creak under the light step of a woman's foot. He turned his head, but saw nothing.

His eyes, however, were attracted by an extraordinary brilliancy on the ocean. He there saw, all at once, a spectacle so sinister that he remained motionless with surprise, doubting the accuracy of his senses. The bright light of the moon permitted him to distinguish sails at a long distance out. He shivered and sought to convince himself that this vision was merely an optical illusion created by the moon and the sea. At that moment a hoarse voice pronounced the officer's name, and, looking toward the breach, he saw the head of the soldier by whom he had been accompanied to the chateau slowly rising above the wall.

"Is that you, my commander?"

"Yes; well?" the young man replied in a low voice.

A sort of presentiment admonished him to proceed cautiously.

"These rascals are wriggling about like worms, and I will hasten, if you will allow me, to communicate my observations to you."

"Speak," responded Victor Marchand.

"I have just followed a man from the house who went in this direction with a lantern in his hand. A lantern is terribly suspicious! I do not believe that a Christian has any need of lighted tapers at this hour. 'They want to destroy us,' I said to myself, and began to follow his footsteps. And so I came to discover, a short distance from here, a heap of fagots upon the rocks—"

A terrible uproar resounded from the town all at once and interrupted the soldier. A flash illumined the commander for an instant and the poor grenadier fell dead with a bullet in his brain. A fire of straw and dry wood began to burn brightly not more than ten paces from the youth. The music and

the laughter ceased in the dancing-hall. A silence as of death, interrupted by groans, had suddenly replaced the merry tumult of the festival. The boom of cannon re-echoed from the ocean. A cold perspiration stood upon the brow of the young officer. He was without his sword. He comprehended that his soldiers had perished and that the English were debarking.

He saw himself dishonored if he survived, tried by court-martial; then he measured the depth of the valley with his eye, and was on the point of rushing forward when Clara's hand seized his own.

"Flee," she said, "my brothers are following me to kill you. At the foot of the rock you will find a saddle-horse. Go!"

She gave him a push and the young man, stupefied, looked at her for a moment; but, obeying the instinct of self-preservation, which never leaves a man, he darted down into the park, taking the direction indicated, and ran over the rocks along which only the goats had hitherto leaped. He heard Clara urging her brothers to pursue him; he heard the steps of the assassins; he heard the balls of several discharges whistle past his ears; but he reached the valley, found the horse, mounted it, and disappeared with the rapidity of a flash of lightning.

The young officer arrived at the quarters of Gen. G—t—r in a few hours. He was at dinner with his staff.

"I bring you my head," cried the chief of battalion, pale and exhausted.

He seated himself and related the horrible adventure. His recital was received with a frightful silence.

"You are more unfortunate than criminal," the terrible general replied at last. "You are not accountable for the crime of the Spaniards, and, unless the marshal shall decide otherwise, I absolve you."

These words afforded but little consolation to the unhappy officer.

"When the Emperor comes to know this!" he exclaimed.

"He would have you shot," said the general; "but we shall see. However, let us talk no more about this," he added in a severe tone. "We must arrange the disaster in such a way as to impress a salutary horror among the Spanish people in this region, where war is carried on in the manner of savages."

An hour later a whole regiment, a detachment of cavalry, and a convoy of artillery were under way. The general and Victor marched at the head of the column. The soldiers, informed of the massacre of their comrades, were filled with unprecedented fury. The distance that separated the city of Menda and the general's head-quarters was traversed with marvelous rapidity. The general found whole villages along the route under arms. Each one of these unfortunate boroughs was invested and its inhabitants slaughtered.

By one of those inexplicable fatalities, the English vessels had remained lying to without advancing. Thus the city of Menda, deprived of the defenders that she expected and that the appearance of the English sails seemed to promise her, was surrounded almost without striking a blow. The inhabitants, seized with terror, offered to surrender at once unconditionally. The assassins of the French, foreseeing from the cruelty of the general that Menda would probably be burned and the entire population put to the sword, proposed to deliver themselves up to the French commander, a self-sacrifice which was not rare in the peninsula in those days.

The general accepted their offer on condition that the inmates of the chateau, from the lowest servant to the Marquis, should also be given into his hands. This condition accepted, the general promised to spare the rest of the inhabitants, and to restrain his soldiers from pillaging and burning the city. An enormous indemnity was levied, and the richest citizens became hostages to guarantee its payment, which was to be effected within the next twenty-four hours.

The general took every precaution for the safety of his troops, provided for the defense of the territory, and refused to lodge his soldiers in the houses of the Spaniards. After he had caused his army to camp, he ascended to the chateau and took military possession of it. The members of the family of Léganès, together with the domestics, were carefully removed from sight, bound and placed in the hall where the ball had taken place. From the windows of this room the terrace, which commanded the city, was easily overlooked. The general's staff was installed in a gallery near by, and here the commander first held a council over the

measures to be adopted for preventing the landing of the enemy. After having sent an aide-de-camp to Marshal Ney, ordered that batteries be planted along the coast, the general and his staff turned their attention to the prisoners. Two hundred Spaniards, whom the inhabitants had delivered up, were immediately shot upon the terrace. After this military execution, the general ordered as many gallows to be erected as there were people in the hall of the chateau, and sent for the city executioner.

Victor Marchand took advantage of the time that elapsed before dinner to go and see the prisoners. He soon returned to the general.

"I hasten," he said in a voice full of emotion, "to ask favors of you."

"You?" replied the general, in a tone of biting irony.

"Alas! I ask sad favors. The Marquis, seeing the gallows erected, hopes that you will not employ this sort of punishment for his family, and prays that you will decapitate the nobility."

"So be it," replied the general.

"They also ask that they may be permitted to receive religious consolation and that their bonds may be removed. They promise not to attempt flight."

"I consent," said the general; "but I shall hold you accountable."

"The old man, moreover, offers you his whole fortune, if you will pardon his young son."

"Indeed!" responded the chief. "His possessions already belong to King Joseph."

He stopped, and his brow became wrinkled with disdain. He added:

"I will surpass their desire. I comprehend the importance of his last request. Ah, well! let him purchase eternity for his name, but let Spain remember his treason and his punishment forever. I will grant life and his father's fortune to that one of his sons that shall perform the duties of the executioner. Go, and speak to me no more."

Dinner was served. The officers, seated at table, satisfied appetites that fatigue had incited. Only one among them, Victor Marchand, was wanting at the banquet. After having hesitated a long time, he entered the hall where the proud family of Léganès were lamenting. He cast sad

glances upon the spectacle now presented by the salon where, so short a time before, he had seen the heads of the three young men and the two young women merrily whirling in the dance. He shuddered to think that soon they would fall, severed from their bodies by the sword of the executioner.

Seated upon their gilded chairs, father, mother, the three sons, and the two daughters remained in complete immobility. Eight servants were standing about with their hands tied behind their backs. These fifteen persons looked at one another gravely, and their eyes scarcely betrayed the feelings by which they were dominated. A profound resignation, regret at having failed in their undertaking, was depicted in some faces. Motionless soldiers, who respected the sorrow of their cruel enemies, guarded them.

A movement of curiosity was manifested when Victor appeared. He ordered the condemned to be relieved of their bonds and went himself to undo the cords that held Clara a prisoner upon her chair. She smiled sadly. The officer could not resist the temptation of lightly touching her arm as he admired her dark hair and lithe form. She was a true Spaniard, with Spanish eyes and eyelashes, blacker than a raven's wing.

"Did you succeed?" she asked, directing one of those sorrowful smiles upon him in which there was still something of the young girl.

Victor could not help groaning. He looked at the three brothers and at Clara in turn. One of the sons, the oldest, was thirty years of age. Small, ill-formed, with a proud and disdainful mien, he was still not without a certain nobility of manner, nor was he a stranger to that delicacy of feeling that formerly made Spanish gallantry so celebrated. His name was Juanito. The second, Philippe, was about twenty years old. He resembled Clara. The youngest was eight years of age. A painter would have found in Manuel's features a little of that Roman constancy that David has given to the children in his republican pages. The head of the aged Marquis was covered with white hair, which seemed as if it might have escaped from a portrait by Murillo.

At this sight the young officer shook his head, as if despairing of seeing the general's proposal accepted by any one of these four

personages. Nevertheless he ventured to confide it to Clara. She shuddered at first, but soon regained her calmness and went and kneeled before her father.

"Oh," she said to him, "cause Juanito to swear that he will faithfully obey the commands that you give him, and we will be content."

The marchioness trembled with hope, but when, leaning toward her husband, she heard Clara's horrible words, she fainted. Juanito understood all, and he bounded up like a lion in a cage.

Victor took upon himself to send away the soldiers, after having obtained a promise of entire submission from the Marquis. The servants were taken away and delivered over to the executioner, who hanged them. When Victor was the only guard over the family, the old man arose.

"Juanito!" he said.

Juanito only replied with a turning aside of his head, equivalent to a refusal, and, sinking back upon the chair, looked at his relatives with dry but terrible eyes. Clara went and seated herself upon his knees.

"My dear Juanito," she said, passing her arm around his neck and kissing him, "if you only knew how sweet death will be to me when suffered for you! Then the odious hands of the executioner will not touch me. You will save me from the evils that would attend me and—my good Juanito, you would not see me in anybody's hands——"

Her velvety eyes cast a fiery look upon Victor, as if to revive in Juanito's heart his horror of the French.

"Have courage," said his brother Philippe to him; "otherwise, our race, almost royal, will become extinct."

Clara arose suddenly, the group that had gathered about Juanito separated, and the son, rightly rebellious, saw standing before him his aged father, who exclaimed, in a solemn tone:

"Juanito, I command you to do this."

The young count remained immovable. His father fell upon his knees before him. Involuntarily Clara, Manuel, and Philippe imitated his example. All extended their hands toward him who could save the family from extinction, and seemed to repeat the paternal words:

"My son, should you now lack the energy of a Spaniard and true sensibility? Can

you leave me here on my knees for a long time, and can you now take your own life and your own sufferings into consideration? Is he my son, madame?" the old man added, turning toward his wife.

"He consents," cried the mother in despair, seeing a movement of Juanito's brows whose meaning she alone understood.

Mariquita, the second daughter, retained her kneeling posture as she closed her mother in her feeble arms, and as she wept warm tears, her little brother Manuel came to reprove her.

At this moment the chaplain of the chateau entered, and he was at once surrounded and led before Juanito. Victor, unable longer to endure this scene, made a sign to Clara and hastened away to attempt a last effort in the prisoners' behalf with the general. He found the latter in good humor, in the midst of the feast, drinking with his officers, who were beginning to be hilarious.

One hour later, one hundred of the most notable citizens of Menda came upon the terrace, according to the order of the general, to be witnesses of the execution of the family of Léganès. A detachment of soldiers surrounded the Spaniards, who were ranged under the same gallows on which the servants had been hanged. The heads of these burghers almost touched the feet of these martyrs. At thirty paces from them arose a block and glittered a scimeter. The executioner was there, in case Juanito should refuse to perform his part. All at once the Spaniards heard, in the midst of a most profound silence, the steps of many people, the measured tramp of a detail of soldiers under march, and the light reports of their muskets. These various sounds were mingled with the joyous acclaims of the officers at their feast, as, not long before, the dancing at the ball had concealed the preparations for bloody treason. All eyes were turned toward the chateau, and the noble family was seen approaching with incredible composure. Every face was calm and serene. One man alone, pale and weak, supported himself upon the arm of the priest, who was offering the consolations of religion, and that man was the only one that was to live.

The executioner understood, as did all the others, that Juanito had accepted his place for a day. The old Marquis, his wife, Clara,

Mariquita, and the two brothers came and knelt a short distance from the fatal spot. Juanito was led by the priest, and when he reached the block the executioner took him aside and probably gave him certain instructions. The confessor placed the victims so that they should not see the executions, but they were true Spaniards and held themselves erect without feebleness.

Clara hastened first toward her brother.

"Have compassion on me for my little courage," she said, "and begin with me."

At that moment the hurrying steps of a man were heard. Victor arrived upon the scene. Clara was already kneeling; already her white neck was inviting the scimeter. The officer grew pale, but he found strength to hasten near.

"The general grants you your life if you will marry me," he said in a low voice.

She cast a glance full of disdain and pride upon the officer.

"Come, Juanito," she said in a deep voice.

Her head rolled at Victor's feet. A convulsive movement passed over her mother. It was the only sign of her sorrow.

"Am I as brave as that, my good Juanito?" asked the little Manuel of his brother.

"Ah, you weep, Mariquita," said Juanito to his sister.

"Oh, yes, I am thinking of you," replied the young girl, "you will be very unhappy without us."

Shortly the tall form of the Marquis appeared. He looked at the blood of his children, turned toward the silent, motionless spectators, extended his hand toward Juanito, and said in a strong voice:

"Spaniards, I give my son a father's benediction. Now, Marquis, strike without fear. You are without reproach."

But when Juanito saw his mother approaching, supported by the confessor, he cried:

"She bore me!"

His voice called forth a cry of horror from the assemblage. The noise of the festivity and the hilarious laughter of the officers died away in the presence of this terrible clamor. The marchioness, perceiving that her son's courage had failed, threw herself from the balustrade with one bound, and her head was shattered upon the rocks below. A cry of admiration arose. Juanito had fainted.

"General," said one of the half-intoxicated officers, "Marchand has just told me an incident of this execution that I will wager you did not order—"

"Do you forget, gentlemen," exclaimed Gen. G—t—r, "that in a month five hundred French families may be in tears and that we are in Spain? Do you wish that we should leave our bones here?"

After this appeal, no one, not even the sub-lieutenant, was found who dared to empty his glass.

Notwithstanding the regard in which he was held, notwithstanding the title of *el verdugo* (the executioner) which the King of Spain gave as a title of honor to the Marquis of Léganès, he was consumed with grief; he lived alone and seldom showed himself to the world. Crushed under the burden of his noble crime, he seems to be impatiently awaiting the birth of a second son, that he may acquire the right to join the shadows with which he is accompanied for evermore.

TO MY UNKNOWN PRETTY NEIGHBOR.

(SEEN DAILY ACROSS THE STREET.)

BY JOEL BENTON.

IF I were you, and you were me,
This is what the world should see :

You would dote upon my eyes
With enraptured, mute surprise :
Gaze upon my radiant, rare
Curls of thick down-falling hair
That—so deep and dark of hue—
Might thrill a misogynist through
By their lustrous, wavy show
On a forehead white as snow.

You would note my willowy grace
Of form,—and rosy, faultless face.
Every motion that I make
Would seem fashioned for thy sake ;
Nowhere could I step, or be,
Without a pang came unto thee—
Or enchantment's nameless power
Fell upon thee as a dower.

You would wonder and adore,
Doubt me inly—half implore ;
Sometimes dream of ecstasies.
Or, despair anon would rise.
You by heart-beats would discover
All the torments of a lover,
And beneath the world's eclipse
Would swear devotion on my lips !

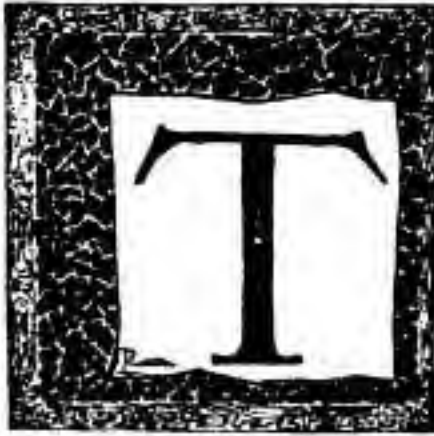
But, since it is plainly true
I am I, and you are you,
I pray you, sweet provoking miss,
Transpose this vexed hypothesis,
And, doing this, no more undo
My heart—that thrills and beats for you ?

MAKÀR'S DREAM.

(A RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS STORY.)

BY VLADIMIR KOROLENKO.

[TRANSLATED BY MRS. ALICE DELANO.]



THIS is the dream of poor Makàr, who drove his calves to far away and dreary tracts, that same Makàr doomed, as all the world knows, to every sort of misfortune.*

His home, in the remote hamlet of Tchalgàn, is well nigh lost in the distant Yaküt forests. Makàr's ancestors had conquered from the forests a bit of frozen ground, and although the gloomy woods still surrounded it as with a hostile wall, they were contented. They divided the lot thus cleared by rail fences; hay-ricks both great and small, and smoky yourts† made their appearance, and at last from the hillock, in the midst of the hamlet, like the standard of a conqueror, a belfry shot upward to the sky. Tchalgàn had become a large settlement.

But while Makàr's sires and grandsires were burning and felling in their struggle with the forest, they were gradually growing less civilized themselves. As they married Yaküt women, and adopted the Yaküt language and customs, the characteristic traits of the great Russian nationality became obliterated and finally disappeared.

In spite of that, however, Makàr never forgot that he was a native Tchalgàn peasant. There he had been born, there he lived, and there he intended to die. He was very proud of his origin, and was sometimes heard to talk about the "filthy Yaküt," although it can not be denied that the difference between the latter and himself either in personal habits or mode of life was not evident. He seldom spoke Russian and that

very poorly; the skin of beasts served him for garments, and on his feet he wore torbas;‡ his daily food consisted of a griddle-cake and "brick tea,"§ and during the holidays or other gala days he would eat the exact quantity of melted butter that was placed before him on the table. He was rather a skillful rider of oxen, and whenever he chanced to fall ill he called the "shaman,"|| who in a frenzy and with gnashing of teeth would rush toward Makàr as if he meant to expel his disease by fright.

He worked hard, fared ill, suffered hunger and cold. Had he an idea beyond his constant anxiety about the griddle-cakes and tea? Yes, he had.

When he was tipsy, he would weep. "What a wretched lot, O Lord!" he used to exclaim. And then he would sometimes add that he wished he could give up everything and go "on the hill." Then there would be no plowing nor sowing, no chopping nor hauling of wood, he need not even grind the grain in a hand-mill. He would have nothing to attend to but the salvation of his soul. He was not sure about this hill, what it was, or where it was; he only knew that there was such a hill, and that it was far away, so far that even the Toyòn Ispràvnik¶ himself could not catch him there. . . . And of course he would have no taxes to pay. . . . When sober he put away those thoughts, realizing, perhaps, the impossibility of finding that wonderful hill; but when drunk he grew bolder. When he thought the matter over, he admitted to himself the danger of chancing on the wrong hill in case he failed to find the right one. "Then I shall be lost," he said, but still he went on making plans for his journey, and if he failed

* In Russian proverbs Makàr is a symbolical and unlucky person overtaken by every sort of misfortune. One proverb says: "Every acorn falls on Makàr." And another: "To be sent to a place where even Makàr never drove his calves," means to be sent to the end of the world.—Tr.

† Siberian huts.—Tr.

‡ Yaküt foot gear.—Tr.

§ The poorest kind of tea pressed in the shape of a brick.—Tr.

¶ Yaküt quack.—Tr.

¶ Toyòn in the Yaküt language means master, chief. Ispràvnik is the chief of police of a district.

to carry them out, it was probably due to the fact that the Tartar settlers always sold him poor vodka that had been steeped in tobacco to increase its strength, which not only weakened him but often made him ill.

It was Christmas Eve, and Makàr knew that to-morrow would be a grand holiday. This made him long to have a drink, but he lacked the wherewithal to obtain it: his bread was nearly out and Makàr was already in debt to the local merchants and Tartars. Still it would be a great holiday to-morrow, no work could be done . . . what could he do if he had no chance to get tipsy? The thought was extremely depressing. What a life was his! Not to be able to drink a bottle of vodka on the great winter feast.

A happy thought occurred to him. He rose and dressed himself in his ragged sòna.* His wife, a remarkably strong and muscular woman, as ugly as she was powerful, and who could read his simple thoughts without trouble, at once divined his intention.

"Where are you bound, you fiend? You have it in your mind to get some more vodka."

"Hush! I am going to buy one bottle. We will drink it together to-morrow."

He winked at her and let his hand fall on her shoulder. Such is the heart of woman! She knew perfectly well that Makàr would deceive her, and yet she succumbed to the charm of the conjugal caress.

He went out to the inclosure, caught his old roan, brought him home by the mane, and began to harness him into the sledge. In a few minutes the roan had carried his master beyond the gate. There he stopped, and turning his head looked askance at Makàr, who seemed lost in his thoughts. Then Makàr pulled the left rein and drove to the end of the village.

On its very outskirts stood a small yourt, from whose fire-place, as from all the others, an undulating volume of smoke rose high in the air, veiling the cold stars and the bright moon. The fire flashed cheerfully through the transparent ice of the windows. It was perfectly still in the yard. Here lived strange people from foreign parts. How they came there, what unlucky chance had cast them upon these distant wilds, Makàr

neither knew nor cared to know, but he liked to deal with them, because they did not try to get the better of him, and were not anxious about their pay.

On entering the yourt, Makàr went straight to the fireplace, and put his cold hands toward the fire.

"Tcha!" he said, by way of expressing his sense of the cold.

The strangers were at home. A lighted candle stood on the table, although they were not working. One of them was lying on the bed puffing rings of smoke, and watching them, musingly, as if they were interwoven with his own thoughts.

The other man sat opposite the hearth; he too gazed thoughtfully at the flames as they ran along the charred wood.

"How do you do!" said Makàr, so as to interrupt the oppressive silence.

He knew nothing of the sorrow that might be weighing upon the hearts of the strangers, of the memories that came crowding in their minds that evening.

"Ah, how do you do, Makàr! Glad to see you. Will you have some tea with us?"

The invitation pleased Makàr.

"Tea? That will be good!"

He began to undress with alacrity. After taking off his sòna and hat he felt more at ease, and when he saw the hot coals glowing in the samovàr he grew quite affectionate toward the young man.

"I love you, I do! . . . So much, so much! I don't sleep nights."

The young man turned and a bitter smile appeared on his face.

"Ah, you love me?" he said. "What do you want then?"

Makàr became confused.

"Yes, I have business," he replied.

"But how did you know? Well, after I drink my tea I will tell you."

As the tea had been offered by the hosts Makàr thought proper to ask:

"Have you any roast meat? I like that."

"No."

"Well, never mind," he said in a reassuring tone, "some other time will do. You will have it some other time?"

"Very well."

Now Makàr considered this an acknowledgment that the strangers owed him a slice of roast meat, and a debt of this description he never forgot.

* Yakiit pelisse.

An hour later he was again in his sledge. He had succeeded in getting a whole rouble in advance, having sold five loads of wood on comparatively easy terms. Although he had sworn by all that was holy that he would not spend the money in liquor that day, he secretly meant to do it. But what of that? The pleasure in store for him deadened the voice of conscience. He gave not a thought to the severe beating that he would have to take from his deceived and faithful spouse if he got drunk.

The knowing horse, with a reproachful switch of his tail slowly turned in the required direction, and soon the creaking runners stopped at the Tartar's gate.

Several horses wearing the high Yaküt saddles stood fastened there.

Within the narrow hut the atmosphere was stifling with the fumes of the strong and cheap tobacco which the fireplace was slowly absorbing. The Yaküt guests sat on benches in front of cups filled with vodka. In one corner a drunken Yaküt sat rocking himself to and fro on the straw, droning an endless song which reiterated the fact that to-morrow was to be big holiday and that he was tipsy to-day.

Makâr put down his money and received the bottle. He hid it in his bosom and withdrew into a dark corner, without attracting the notice of the others. There pouring out cup after cup, he swallowed their contents in rapid succession. The vodka was bitter and more than a third part water, being diluted for the occasion of the holiday. At every swallow Makâr gasped and red circles swam before his eyes.

Presently he became quite drunk. He too let himself fall on the straw, and clasping his knees with his hands, rested his heavy head upon them. He sang of the holiday and of his spending in liquor five loads of wood.

Meanwhile the hut grew more and more crowded. New Yaküt guests entered, who had come to say their prayers and to drink the Tartar vodka. The landlord remarked that there would not be room for many more. He rose from the table, and as with one sweeping glance he reviewed the entire assembly, he caught sight in the dark corner of Makâr and his other guest.

He approached the Yaküt and taking him by the collar threw him out of the hut. Then

he went up to Makâr. The latter being a local settler was treated with greater respect.

Opening wide his door, he gave the poor man a kick that hurled him from the hut into a snow bank.

It would have been difficult to discover whether he realized that he had been insulted. Extricating himself from the snow bank as best he could, he started for home.

The moon was now quite high. The constellation of the Great Bear had already begun to droop its tail. The frost was increasing. Softly flashing against a dark semicircular cloud in the north, rose from time to time the fiery columns of the Aurora Borealis.

The roan, who evidently realized the condition of his master, started with prudent intelligence for his home. Makâr sat on the sledge, rocking from side to side and continuing to sing. He sang of squandering five loads of wood and of the beating his old woman would give him. The sounds that came from his throat wailed so pitifully and mournfully through the air, that a stranger who had chanced at that moment to climb up on the top of his yurt in order to close the chimney of the fireplace felt still sadder as he heard Makâr's song. In the meantime the roan had dragged the sledge up to the hillock, which commanded a view of the surrounding country. The snow glittered brightly, bathed in the moonlight. At times the light seemed to melt, as it were, the snow took on a darker hue, and the flashing Aurora was for the moment reflected from it. Then one might fancy that the snow-covered hills overgrown with forests alternately approached and receded. On the edge of the forest Makâr could plainly see the snowy baldness of Yamalâch hill, on the other side of which he had set traps in the woods for beasts and birds.

This changed the current of his thoughts. He began to sing of a fox caught in his trap. To-morrow he will sell the skin, and then the old woman will spare him.

The first stroke of the bell was echoing through the frosty air when Makâr entered the hut. He at once informed the old woman that there was a fox caught in the trap, quite forgetting that she had not been indulging in vodka, and was taken by surprise when she began pounding him.

He fell flat upon his bed. His head burned.

His stomach seemed on fire. The strong infusion of liquor steeped on tobacco was coursing through his veins. Cold drops of melting snow trickled down his face.

The old woman thought that he was asleep. But he was not asleep. He could not get that fox out of his mind. He was sure that it had been caught in the trap; he even knew which trap it was. He could see the animal, held fast by the heavy log, pawing the snow with its claws in its efforts to escape. The moonbeams darting through the thicket played on its golden colored fur. He saw its eyes sparkle. He could endure it no longer, and rising from his bed, he was on the point of getting his faithful roan and starting for the woods.

But what was this? Could it be the vigorous hand of the old woman seizing him by the collar of his fur coat and throwing him back on the bed?

No, it could not be, for he was already beyond the village. The runners creaked monotonously over the firm snow. He had left the village behind him. He could hear the triumphant ringing of the church bells. Standing out against the dark horizon line that intersected the shining sky, he could see the faint outlines of the Yaküt horsemen hastening to church.

Meanwhile the moon had set, and to the zenith rose a white cloud shining with a phosphorescent light. All at once it seemed to burst and spread in all directions in many-colored rays of flame, while the semicircular cloud on the north grew darker and darker, until it became quite black, blacker than the forest to which Makàr was making his way.

The road wound between thick clumps of bushes. Low hills rose to right and to left. The further he went, the taller grew the trees and the denser the forest. It was silent and mysterious. The naked branches of the larch trees were covered with silvery sheen. The soft glimmer of the Aurora, stealing through their tops, flashed to and fro, now revealing a snowy glade, and again the prostrate bodies of the giants of the forest as they lay there besprinkled with snow. . . . The next moment all was lost in the silent and mysterious darkness.

Makàr paused. This was the spot where a system of traps began that reached nearly to the road. By the aid of the phosphorescent light he could distinctly see the low fence

of fallen trees, and even caught sight of the first trap: three long heavy logs propped by an inclined stick and supported by a cunning arrangement of levers with hair ropes.

These traps were not his, to be sure; but the fox might possibly have been caught in another man's traps. Makàr hastily jumped off his sledge, leaving the wise pony in the road, stood still and listened.

Not a sound to be heard in the woods. Only from the distant settlement, now lost to sight, still came the festive ringing.

He had nothing to fear. At this moment the owner of the traps, Alyòshka Chalgànov, Makàr's neighbor and sworn enemy, was sure to be in church. No footprints were visible on the smooth surface of the snow.

He plunged into the thicket. No sound but the snow creaking under his feet. Side by side stood the traps like a row of cannon, their mouths gaping wide expectantly.

Hark! A slight rustling close beside him. He caught the sudden flash of red fur in an open glade among the trees. Makàr distinctly saw the sharp ears of the fox, with its bushy tail waving to and fro, as though enticing him into the thicket. It vanished between the trunks of the trees in the direction of Makàr's traps, and soon after a dull but heavy thud echoed through the forest.

Makàr's heart beat fast. A log had fallen. He rushed toward it, pushing his way through the thicket. The cold branches struck him on the eyes, covering his face with snow. He stumbled and panted for breath. Now he had reached the clearing which he himself had made. On both sides rose the trees whitening with the hoarfrost, and beneath them, growing narrower and narrower, could be seen the winding-path, at the end of which was the mouth of the large trap. . . . Suddenly on the path, close to the trap, a white form glimmered for an instant and vanished. Makàr recognized Alyòshka Chalgànov, his small, thick-set figure lurching along with the gait of a bear, was not to be mistaken. It seemed to Makàr, that Alyòshka's dark face, had grown still darker, and his big teeth grinned even more than usual.

Makàr felt thoroughly indignant. "The rascal! . . . He rummages in my traps." It is needless to remark that Makàr himself had just been inspecting those of Alyòshka, but this was a very different matter.

There was the fallen log, and under it he could see the red fur of the ensnared creature. The fox was pawing the snow, exactly as Makàr had imagined, and looking at him with the same sharp, burning eyes which he had seen in his fancy.

"Let him alone! . . . He is mine!" called out Makàr to Alyòshka.

"Don't touch him," echoed back the voice of Alyòshka. "He is mine!"

They both ran up at the same instant and began hurriedly lifting the log, thus setting the creature free. As the log rose, the fox rose too. It made one leap, stopped, gave both men a mocking glance, then bending its head licked the sore spot and bounded merrily away, gratefully flirting its tail.

Alyòshka started in pursuit, but Makàr seized the skirt of his coat.

Makàr was very angry. He forgot all about the fox in his desire to overtake Alyòshka, who was running away from him.

Faster and faster they ran. Alyòshka's cap was pulled from his head by the branch of a larch tree and he had no time to pick it up. Makàr was on the point of seizing him, with a cry of rage. But the cunning Alyòshka had always been more than a match for poor Makàr. He suddenly stopped, turned and ducked, bringing his head into violent contact with Makàr's stomach, and pitching him into the snow. As he fell, that cursed Alyòshka seized the hat from his head and disappeared in the forest.

Makàr rose with difficulty. He knew he was conquered and felt thoroughly miserable. The fox had been in his possession . . . and now . . . he felt as if he could still see it in the dark thicket flirting its tail derisively as it vanished in the distance.

Multitudinous rivulets of melting snow trickled down Makàr's body. The snow which had made its way into his sleeves, behind the collar of his fur coat, was now streaming down his back, and pouring into his boots. That cursed Alyòshka had carried off his hat. He had lost his mittens somewhere in the course of his race. Matters were looking pretty gloomy. Makàr knew that frost has small mercy on people who wander about the forest without hat or mittens.

He had been walking for a long time. According to his own calculations he ought long since to have left the Yamàlack behind; the belfry should have been in sight, and he

was not as yet out of the woods. Like an enchanted forest it seemed to hold him in its embrace, and the same solemn pealing reached his ears from the distance. It seemed to Makàr that although he was going toward this sound, it kept receding further and further, and as the tones grew fainter by degrees, Makàr's heart sank within him.

He was tired and disheartened. His feet were benumbed. The thought "it may fare ill with me," came oftener and oftener to his mind. But still he kept on.

Young trees struck him rudely on the face, jeering at his helplessness. In one spot he saw a rabbit run out into the clearing, and there resting on his haunches and pricking up his white ears spotted with black, he began to wash himself, making all the while the most impudent grimaces at Makàr, as if he would give him to understand that he knew him for the very same Makàr who had set cunning traps in the woods for his undoing. And now it was his turn to laugh.

Makàr was much disturbed. Meanwhile the forest had grown full of hostile life. As he passed along, even the distant trees stretched forth long branches barring his path, caught at his hair, or switched him across the face and eyes. Woodcocks came out of their hiding places, and looked at him with their round, curious eyes, and the woodpecker ran to and fro angrily spreading his long tail and wings and clamored to his mate about the evil doing and cunning devices of Makàr. To cap the climax he saw in the distant thickets the glimmering faces of thousands of foxes. Snuffing the air and moving their sharp ears to and fro, they gazed at Makàr. The hares stood before them on their hind legs and laughed as they listened to the tale of Makàr's woes.

This was beyond all endurance.

"I am certainly coming to grief," thought Makàr, and decided to make the best of it.

He stretched himself out on the snow.

The cold was increasing. The last feeble reflections of the Aurora glimmered across the sky, peering through the tops of the trees at the spot where Makàr was lying. The last reverberations of the bell reached him from the distant Tchàlgan.

The light flickered and disappeared. The ringing had ceased.

And Makàr died.

He could not tell how it all happened. He was waiting for that something which he knew must leave his body, to depart. But nothing left.

He realized, however, that he was dead, and therefore lay quiet and motionless. Thus he remained for a long time, so long in fact that he grew quite tired of it.

It had already grown dark when Makàr suddenly felt some one kicking him. He turned his head and opened his eyes. The beech trees now rose above him meek and peaceful, as though repenting of their former tricks. The shaggy fur trees stretched forth their broad, snow-covered arms, gently swaying from side to side. Shining snow-flakes fell softly through the air.

From the deep blue sky overhead the kindly stars looked down through the thick branches as much as to say: "See, the poor man is dead."

Over the body of Makàr, kicking him with foot, stood the old priest Ivan. The snow lay on his shoulders; in fact the whole of his long surplice, as well as his beard and fur hat, were covered with it, but the strangest part of it was that this was the self-same priest Ivan who had died four years ago.

He had been a kind priest. He never oppressed Makàr on account of his fees, never even asking for his pay when he officiated for him. Makàr paid him whatever he pleased for christenings and Te Deums, and now remembered with shame that often he had paid him too little, and sometimes even not at all. But the priest Ivan had never resented this; the one thing that he required was a bottle of vodka for every service. If Makàr had not the money, priest Ivan would send for it himself, and they would drink it together. The priest was forever getting drunk, but he seldom fought and had no malice in his nature. Makàr generally carried the helpless man to his home and left him to the care of his wife.

Yes, he had been a kind priest, but he had met with a painful death. Once, when every one was out, and the drunken priest lay alone in his bed, he was seized with a longing to smoke. He rose, and staggered up to the wide fire place, where a fire was burning, to light his pipe. But he was too much intoxicated; he reeled and fell into the fire. When the family returned, there was nothing left of him but his feet.

Everybody was sorry for the kind priest Ivan, but as nothing was left of him but his feet, no doctors in the world could cure him. They buried the feet and another priest was appointed in his place.

Now this same priest, made whole again to all appearances, stood over Makàr and was gently pushing him with his foot.

"Rise, Makàr," he said. "We must go."

"Where am I to go?" asked Makàr, somewhat vexed.

He had supposed that once he "had come to grief," he would have nothing to do but to stay perfectly quiet, and that there would be no need of roaming aimlessly through the forest. Otherwise why should he have come to grief?

"We must go to the Great Tòyon." *

"Why am I to go to him?" asked Makàr.

"He is to judge you," said the priest, in mild and sorrowful tones.

Then Makàr remembered, that after death one had to appear at the judgment bar. He used to hear about that in church. Of course the priest was right and he must go.

Grumbling under his breath, Makàr rose; it seemed that there was no peace for a man, even after death.

The priest walked ahead and Makàr followed. They walked straight onward. The beech trees meekly made way before them as they passed. They went towards the east. Makàr noticed with surprise that Father Ivan left no foot-prints on the snow, and glancing downward discovered that it was even so with himself. The snow was as white and spotless as a tablecloth.

The thought occurred to him how convenient this would be for rummaging in other men's traps without the risk of getting found out; but the priest, who had evidently guessed his secret thought, turned toward him and said:

"Beware! You do not know what you will have to suffer for every thought like that."

"Am I not to be allowed even to think as I please? You have become very severe all at once," said Makàr.

The priest shook his head and continued on his way.

"How far have we to go?" asked Makàr.

* Master, host, chief.—Author's note.

"A long way," replied the priest, in a sad voice.

"And what shall we have to eat?" uneasily inquired Makàr.

"You forget that you are dead," replied the priest, turning toward him, "and that you will need neither food nor drink."

Makàr did not like this. It was all very well, as there happened to be nothing to eat; but it would have been better to remain lying where he was after he died.

"Don't grumble," said the priest.

"All right," replied Makàr, in an injured voice; but still he went on grumbling to himself and complaining of this unreasonable arrangement. "To make a man walk and not allow him to eat."

They had been walking a long time. Although it was not yet dawn, it seemed to Makàr, judging from the distance they had traversed, they must have been walking for a week at least, so many ravines and mountains, rivers and lakes, forests and plains had they passed. Whenever Makàr looked back it seemed to him that the forest was receding from them and the high mountains dissolving away in the twilight and disappearing below the horizon.

They seemed to be rising higher and higher. The stars grew larger and brighter. Then over the ridge of the hill they were climbing appeared the rim of the setting moon. It seemed as if in haste to get out of sight, but Makàr and the priest were overtaking it. At last it began to rise again above the horizon. Now they were walking along a high level plain.

Suddenly Makàr, who had been looking closely at one of the horsemen, turned and ran after him.

"Wait! wait!" cried the priest. But he did not hear him. He had recognized a Tartar of his acquaintance who six years before had stolen his sorrel horse, and who died the very next year. Now this Tartar was riding the same sorrel horse. The horse was galloping wildly. From beneath his hoofs flew clouds of snow, sparkling with the variegated reflections of the star rays. Makàr could not understand how he, a foot passenger, could so easily overtake the Tartar at full gallop. When, however, the latter perceived that Makàr was within a few paces of him he stopped.

"Come to the Stàrosta,"* Makàr cried.

"This is my horse! His right ear is cut! You ride another man's horse, while the master is walking like a beggar!"

"Wait," said the Tartar, "why should we go to the Stàrosta? You say this is your horse. Take him then! Cursed beast! I have been riding him for five years and make no progress whatever. Every day foot-men get ahead of me; it is a disgrace to a Tartar."

And he raised his foot to dismount, but just then the priest, all out of breath, ran up to them and seized Makàr's hand.

"Wretched man! what are you doing?" he exclaimed. "Can't you see that the Tartar is trying to deceive you?"

"Of course he is," exclaimed Makàr, gesticulating. "It was a good horse!—a capital horse for work. . . . I was offered forty roubles for him when he was three years old. . . . No, indeed! If you have injured my horse, I will kill him for his flesh, and you shall pay me in cash. You think because you are a Tartar you can do as you please?"

Makàr grew excited and talked louder and louder to attract a crowd about him, for he was afraid of the Tartars. But the priest checked him.

"Hush, hush, Makàr. You keep forgetting that you have died. . . . Of what use is a horse to you? Besides can't you see that you are walking faster than the Tartar rides? Would you like to be traveling a thousand years?"

Makàr now understood why the Tartar was willing to give up the horse.

"They are a cunning tribe!" he thought.

"All right!" he cried, "go along with your horse. . . . I shall complain of you all the same."

The Tartar angrily clapped on his hat and gave the horse a blow. The horse pranced, clouds of snow flew from under his hoofs, but not one step did he advance while Makàr and the priest stood there.

He spat angrily, as he said to Makàr:

"Have you a leaf of tobacco, friend? I am suffering for a smoke, and I used up my tobacco four years ago."

"Call a dog your friend!" angrily replied Makàr. "You are a shrewd fellow. You stole my horse, and now you are begging for tobacco! I have no pity for you."

*Elder of a village commune.—*Tr.*

And saying this Makâr went on.

"You were wrong not to give him a leaf of tobacco," remarked Priest Ivan; "for an act like that, the Great Toyôn would have forgiven you not less than one hundred sins."

"Why did you not tell me so before?" snapped Makâr.

"It is too late to teach you now. You should have learned it from your priests during your lifetime."

Makâr was vexed. He had gained nothing from the priests. They had taken their fees, but had never taught him the proper time to give the Tartar a leaf of tobacco, that he might receive absolution for his sins.

"Wait a moment," he said; "one leaf will do for us, and the other four I will give to the Tartar at once."

"Look back," said the priest.

Makâr turned. Behind him stretched the deserted snow-covered plain. The Tartar looked like a dot shining in the distance.

"Well, never mind!" said Makâr, "this Tartar can do without his tobacco. He hurt my horse, the cursed fellow!"

"No," said the priest, "he has not injured your horse. Have you never heard the old saying, one can not go far on a stolen horse?"

Makâr had, indeed, heard this saying, but as he had often seen the Tartars enter the very town itself on stolen horses, he had naturally put very little faith in it. Now he perceived that there is truth even in old sayings. He began to overtake a good many riders along the plain. They all seemed to be making the same sort of progress as the first one. The horses flew like birds, the riders were reeking with perspiration, and still Makâr left every one of them behind.

They were mostly Tartars, but now and then he met a Tchalgân settler; some of these were riding stolen oxen, urging them along with sticks.

Makâr regarded the Tartars with displeasure, and every time he met one, he would mutter something to the effect that they were not getting suitable punishment; but whenever he met a Tchalgân settler he paused and entered into friendly conversation with him: they were friends, at least, even if they had been thieves. Now and then by way of expressing his sympathy, he would even pick up a stick from the road and try to

urge their beasts along; but after a very few paces on his side, these riders diminished to barely perceptible specks, a long way behind him. There was no apparent limit to the plain. Although he was constantly passing both riders and foot passengers, it was of so vast an extent that it still seemed deserted. It seemed as if hundreds, nay thousands of versts lay between each traveler.

Among others Makâr encountered a strange old man, evidently from Tchalgân,—Makâr knew that from his face, his dress and even from his gait, but he could not remember to have met him before. The old man wore a tattered sôna, a large projecting fur hat, old leathern trousers, no less ragged and worn out calf skin tôrbas. But the most pitiful part of it was, that in spite of his age and infirmities, he bore on his shoulders a still older woman, whose feet dragged along the ground. The old man panted, he could not rightly control his feet and he leaned heavily on the stick. Makâr pitied him. He stopped. The old man stopped also.

After a short silence Makâr thought he might venture to question the old man whence he came and whither he was going.

The latter told him what his name was. Long ago, he had forgotten how many years ago it was since, he left Tchalgân and went to "the hill" to save his soul. There he did nothing whatever; living on berries and roots, he neither plowed, nor sowed, nor did he grind the grain, or pay the taxes. After his death he went to the old Toyôn to be judged. When the Toyôn asked him who he was and what he had done, he replied that he had lived on the hill for the salvation of his soul. "Very well," said Toyôn, "and where is your old woman? Return and fetch her." So he went after her; now the old woman had died a beggar, for she had no one to support her, and neither house, nor cows, nor bread. She had grown very feeble and could hardly drag one foot after the other. And he was obliged to carry her to the great Toyôn.

The old man wept, and the old woman kicked him, as if she were driving an ox, saying in a faint but angry voice:

"Go along!"

Makâr pitied the old man still more and was thankful that he had not gone to "the hill," for his old woman was tall and heavy,

and he would have had a hard time carrying her.

Journeying onward Makàr met no more people upon whom he bestowed special attention. They were thieves bowed down like beasts of burden, with stolen goods, barely able to drag themselves forward; stout Yaküt Toyòns jolted along on their high saddles, almost touching the skies with their tall hats; they looked like towers. Here, too, the poor workmen hobbled along as light and thin as rabbits. With wild and wandering gaze, a gloomy looking, blood-stained murderer stalked along. In vain he threw himself into the snow hoping to wash away those stains of blood. The snow instantly reddened and seethed like boiling water, the stains came out brighter than ever, and wild despair and horror were depicted on his face as he strode onward, trying to avoid the terrified glances of those whom he met. The souls of little children fluttered in the air like birds. Makàr felt no surprise when they flew past in crowds. The poor, coarse food, the filth, the open chimneys and the cold draughts in the yourts caused the death of hundreds in Tchalgàn alone. As they drew near the murderer, they dashed aside in a frightened crowd, and for long after they had passed one could still hear the swift fluttering sound of their tiny wings.

Makàr could not help seeing that he was making rapid progress as compared with the others, and he lost no time in setting this down to the account of his virtue.

"What do you think about it, father?" he asked. "I acknowledge that I loved the cup, but after all I was a good man. God loves me."

"Do not pride yourself on your virtue. We are not far from the goal. You will soon find out for yourself."

Makàr had not until now observed that daylight was breaking over the plain. A few bright rays, like the first strains from a full orchestra, broke upon the horizon, and swiftly traversing the sky put out the burning stars. The fogs arose and hovered like sentinels around it. Toward the east they shone like bright warriors clad in golden armor; they wavered, and bowed their heads. Above them rose the sun, pausing to rest upon their golden crests and overlook the plain, which was illumined by an unseen and dazzling light.

Then the fogs rising majestically heavenward were rent asunder in the west, and Makàr heard a wondrous song. It seemed no other than the well-known anthem with which the earth each morning greets the sun; but now Makàr perceived the wondrous beauty which had before passed unheeded.

He stood listening with but one desire, that so listening he might remain forever. But Ivan touched him on the sleeve.

"Come," he said, "this is the place."

Then Makàr perceived that they were standing near a wide open door, that had been hidden from them by the mists. He felt reluctant to enter, but obeyed.

It was not until they found themselves within a spacious hut that Makàr noticed that it had been frosty outside. In the middle of the hut stood a beautiful fireplace of pure silver and fine workmanship, wherein burned golden logs, diffusing a gentle warmth that enveloped the whole person. The blaze from the mournful fireplace did not try the eyes, nor scorch the face, it merely sent forth a grateful warmth, and here Makàr again longed to remain forever warming himself. The priest Ivan also drew near the fireplace and stretched forth his cold hands.

The hut had three inner doors and but one outer one, and through the former young men clad in long white garments passed incessantly to and fro. Makàr took them for Toyòn's servants. He felt as if he must have seen them before, but he could not remember just where. He was much surprised to discover large white wings attached to their shoulders, but he decided that the Tòyon no doubt had other servants, for with those wings they could never make their way through the dense forest, either to chop wood or gather fagots.

One of the servants approached the fire also, and turning his back to it spoke to priest Ivan.

"Speak!"

"I have nothing to say."

"What have you heard in the world?"

"I heard nothing."

"What did you see?"

"I saw nothing."

Both were silent; then the priest said:

"I have brought you a man."

"Is he from Tchalgàn?" asked the laborer.

"Yes."

"Then we must prepare the large scales."

And he went through one of the doors to give orders, while Makàr asked the priest for what purpose the scales were needed and why they wanted large ones.

"Well, you must know," replied the priest, slightly confused, "that the scales are needed to weigh your good and evil deeds. With most persons the good and evil will nearly balance the cups. But the inhabitants of Tchalgàn have committed so many sins that for them the Toyòn was obliged to order special scales, with a large cup for sins." Makàr's heart sank within him when he heard these words.

The big scales were brought in and set up. One cup was made of gold and very small, the other was of wood, and very large, and beneath the latter a deep and dark chasm suddenly appeared.

Makàr approached the scales and carefully examined them to make sure that they were correct. They proved to be perfectly true. The cups hung motionless on the same level. But he did not quite understand their construction and would have chosen the common scales, on which he had learned to buy and sell to his own advantage.

"The Toyòn is coming," said the priest Ivan, and he began hurriedly arranging his surplice.

The middle door opened and a very aged Toyòn appeared with a silvery beard extending below his waist. He was clad in rich, and to Makàr unfamiliar furs and stuffs, and on his feet he wore boots trimmed with velvet.

The very first glance revealed to Makàr that this was the same aged being whose picture he had seen in church. His son, however, was not beside him. Makàr thought that he was probably absent on business. A dove flew into the room and circling around the old man's head, it settled on his knees, and he caressed the dove with his hand, while he sat on a chair that had been specially prepared for him. The old Toyòn had a benevolent face, and whenever Makàr felt oppressed he looked at that face and took courage. Now Makàr began to feel sad, for suddenly he remembered every smallest detail of his entire life, every step he had trodden, every stroke of

the axe, every tree he had felled, every deceitful action and every glass of vodka.

And he felt not only ashamed but afraid, and still as he gazed on the face of the old Toyòn he took heart.

And taking heart the thought occurred to him that perhaps he might be able to conceal some things.

The old Toyòn looked at him and asked him his name, his age and whence he came.

Makàr had replied and the Toyòn asked:

"What have you done during your life?"

"You must know yourself what I have done," replied Makàr, "you have it written down."

Makàr was feeling his way, so to speak, trying to discover whether all the deeds of his life had actually been written down.

"It is for you to tell," said the old Toyòn.

And Makàr felt encouraged.

He began to render an account of his labors, and although he remembered perfectly well every stroke of the axe, every pole he had chopped and every furrow he had plowed, yet he multiplied his poles by thousands and his loads of wood as well as his poods* of sowing by hundreds. After he had enumerated everything, the old Toyòn turned to the priest Ivan and said:

"Bring hither the book."

Then Makàr saw the priest Ivan served as a clerk to the old Toyòn, and was vexed that he had not been told of that. The priest Ivan brought in a big book, opened it and began to read:

"Tell me how many poles," said the old Toyòn.

After looking carefully priest Ivan said in a tone that expressed his disappointment:

"He has added three thousand."

"He lies," exclaimed Makàr angrily. "How is he likely to be right? he was a drunkard and died a bad death."

"Be silent!" said the old Toyòn. "Has he ever charged you an extra fee for weddings or christenings? Did he press you for his pay?"

"No, I can not say that he did," replied Makàr.

"I have always known that he was fond of drinking," said the Toyòn.

Then the old Toyòn waxed angry, and he said to the priest Ivan:

* One pood equals thirty-six English pounds.

"Now read the list of his sins that is written in the book, for he is proved a liar, and I can not trust him."

Meanwhile the servants of the Toyòn had thrown into the golden cup Makàr's poles, his wood, his plowing and all his work. And this weighed so heavily that the golden cup sank low, and the wooden one rose so high that no hands could reach it; then the young Toyòn's servants soared upward by means of their wings and one hundred of them pulled it down with ropes.

The Tchalgàn settler had worked hard indeed. Now priest Ivan began to count his lies, and it was made manifest that there were twenty-one thousand nine hundred and thirty-three of them; then he began to count the number of bottles of vodka he had drunk, which proved to be four hundred. The priest had not yet finished his reading when Makàr saw that the wooden cup of the scales already outweighed the golden one, sinking lower and lower toward the pit.

Then Makàr began to think that his chance was a poor one, and approaching the scales he tried to hold the cup with his foot. But one of the Toyòn's servants observed him.

"What is the matter?" asked the old Toyòn.

"He was meddling with the scales," replied the Toyòn's servant.

Then the Toyòn turned angrily to Makàr and said: "It is plain that you are a liar, an indolent fellow and a drunkard! Moreover, you have left your taxes unpaid, you owe fees to the priest, and you have tempted the Ispràvnik to sin."

Then turning to priest Ivan, the old Toyòn asked:

"Who is it in Tchalgàn that loads horses most heavily and drives them hardest?"

The priest Ivan replied:

"The church bursar. He carries the mails and drives the Ispràvnik."

Then the old Toyòn said:

"Let this lazy fellow become a bursar's horse and carry the Ispràvnik, till he falls to the ground."

But just as the old Toyòn had said this, the door opened and his son entered the hut, taking a seat on the old Toyòn's right hand.

The son said: "I heard your verdict. I lived with the world many years and know how matters go on there: it will be hard for the poor man to carry the Ispràvnik! Per-

haps he may have something more to say in his defense. Speak, poor man!"

Then a remarkable thing happened. Makàr, the very Makàr who never in all his life had uttered more than ten words at a time, grew suddenly eloquent. He spoke, and great was his own surprise. It was as if there were two Makàrs: one speaking and the other listening. He expressed himself easily, and in forcible language, the words followed each other in rapid succession, arranging themselves in long, well-framed sentences. He felt no fear. If he chanced to hesitate, he at once recovered himself, and continued in more loud and impressive tones. And it was consoling to feel that his words carried conviction. The old Toyòn, who at first had been somewhat vexed by his audacity, afterward listened to him with close attention, as though he had begun to realize that Makàr was not such a fool as he seemed. At first the priest Ivan was really frightened, and pulled Makàr by the skirt of his sòna, but the latter put him aside and went on as before. After a while even the priest lost his fear, and smiled to know that his parishioner is speaking the truth and that this truth pleases the old Toyòn. Even the white-winged youths in their long, snowy garments, who were the old Toyòn's servants, came to the doors and listened in amazement to Makàr's words.

He began by saying that he did not wish to be a bursar's horse, not that he feared work, but because the sentence was unjust. And to an unjust sentence he refuses to submit; not an inch will he budge. Let them do with him whatever they please! Let them even give him up to the devil for a servant, he would not carry the Ispràvnik, because it was unjust. And they need not think that he dreaded to be a horse: the bursar drives his horse hard, to be sure, but he feeds him with oats; he himself had been driven all his life, but no oats had ever fallen to his lot. Driven by starostas and elders, by assessors and Ispràvniks collecting their taxes, he had been driven by priests who would have their pay; driven by necessity and hunger, by frost and heat, by rain and droughts; driven by the frozen ground and the malicious woods! Beasts travel with eyes down, not knowing whither they are driven. Thus it was with him. Did he understand what the priest read in church and

why he required his fees? Did he know the reason why they took his oldest son and carried him off to be a soldier, or where he died, or even where his poor bones lie? They accuse him of drinking much vodka! He does not deny it; it is true, but he was forced to it.

"How many bottles did you say?"

"Four hundred," replied the priest Ivan, looking into the book.

Very well! But was this vodka? Three-quarters water and but one-quarter of real vodka, and steeped on tobacco; three hundred bottles ought to be deducted.

"Does he speak the truth?" asked the old Toyòn, turning to the priest Ivan; it was evident that he was still vexed.

"He is telling the simple truth," replied the priest, hastily, and Makàr continued.

He had added three thousand poles to his account! What of it? Supposing he had only chopped sixteen thousand, would that be called a small piece of work? And moreover, two thousand of these he had chopped while his first wife was ill, . . . and his heart was aching, for he wanted to stay with her, his old woman, but necessity drove him into the woods, . . . and there he wept, while the tears froze on his eyelashes, and the cold entered his sorely stricken heart. . . . But he went on chopping! . . . Then his old woman died. He must bury her, and where was the money to pay for it? He hired himself out to chop wood, to pay for the old woman's lodging in the next world. . . . And the merchant, knowing him to be sorely pressed, paid him only ten copecks a load, . . . his wife meanwhile lying alone in the cold, fireless hut, and he in the woods chopping and weeping. Loads like those might well be reckoned five times over, or even more!

Tears came to the eyes of the old Toyòn, and Makàr saw that the cups of the scales had begun to waver, the wooden cup was rising, and the golden one sinking. And still Makàr went on. If everything is set down in their books. . . . then let them look and see if ever he received a caress, a welcome, or any joy whatever from mortal being? Where are his children? If they died his heart grew heavy and sadness filled his soul, and if they grew up, they left him to struggle alone against the most abject poverty. Then he grew old, with no companion but his second old woman; he could

feel his strength grow less and helpless old age came creeping on. They were alone, like two solitary pine trees in the steppe, buffeted on all sides by the wintry gales.

"Is that true?" again asked the old Toyòn.

And the priest hastily replied:

"It is quite true!"

Again the scales wavered. But the old Toyòn had grown thoughtful.

"How is this?" he said. "On earth my righteous people have eyes clear, faces bright and garments unsullied. Their hearts are like rich soil; they receive the good seed and return the white lily of the fields and fragrant harvests, whose odor delights me. And behold this man.

"Your face is dark," continued the old Toyòn, "your eyes are dim, your garments are torn, your heart is overgrown with weeds, thorns and wormwood. The righteous are dear to me, but from the evil doer I turn my face."

Makàr's heart sank within him. He felt ashamed of his own existence. His head dropped, but again he raised it, and spoke.

He knew not whom the Toyòn meant by the righteous. If they were such that lived in rich houses when Makàr was on earth he knew them. . . . Their eyes were bright because they had shed fewer tears than he, their faces shone because they bathed in perfumed waters, and their spotless garments were woven by the hands of others.

If Makàr could have known the effect of his words on the old Toyòn, if he could have seen that every angry word he uttered fell into the golden cup like a weight of lead, he would have controlled his anger. But he saw nothing of this, for blind despair filled his heart.

The old Toyòn said to him:

"Wait, poor fellow, you are no longer on earth. There will be justice for you also."

And Makàr trembled. He felt that he was pitied and his heart softened, and as he beheld a vision of his wretched life from first to last, he felt unspeakably sorry for himself. And he wept.

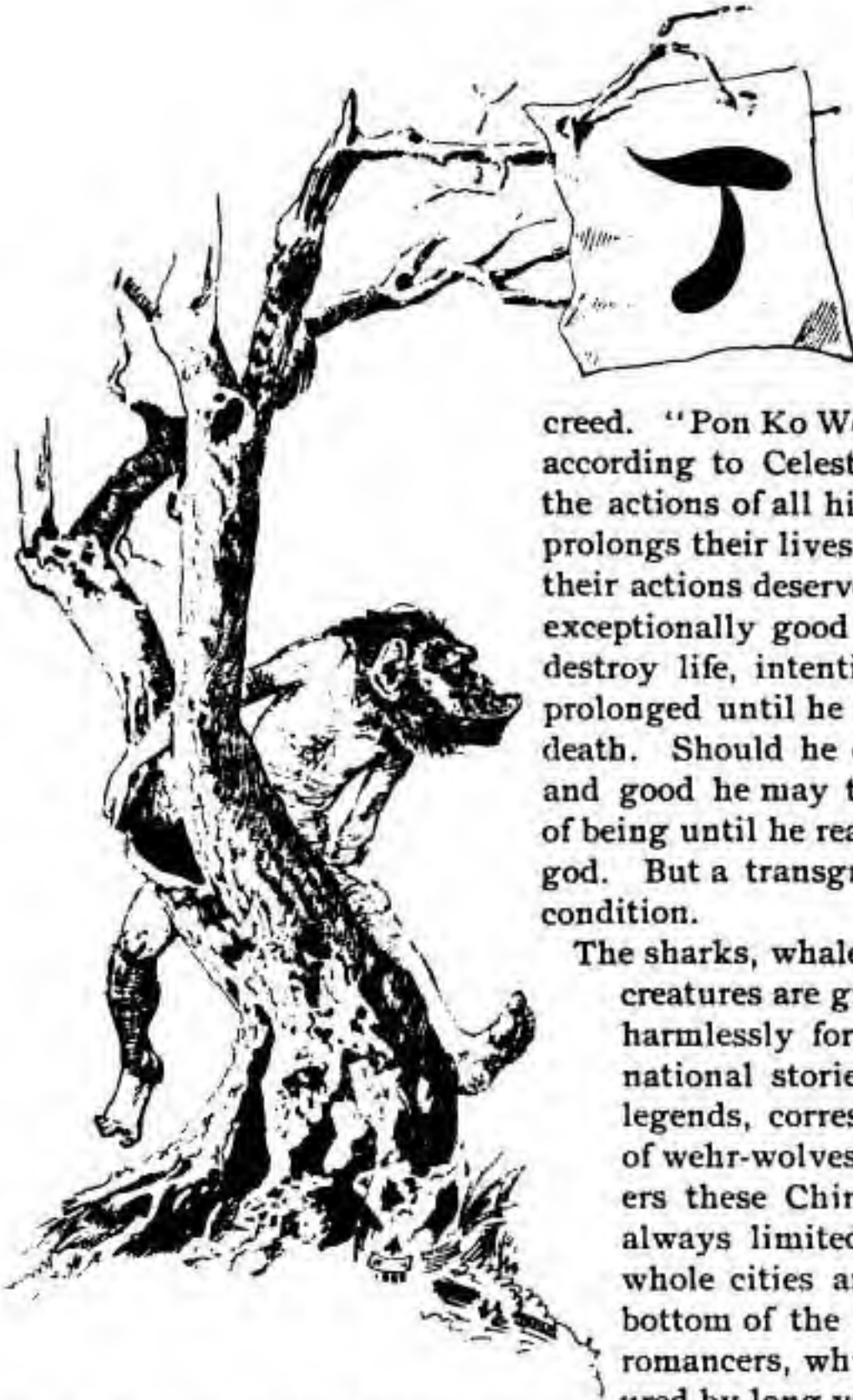
The old Toyòn wept also. So did the old priest Ivan and the young servants of the Toyòn shed tears, wiping them away with their broad white sleeves.

And the scales still wavered, but the wooden cup rose higher and higher.

POH YUIN KO, THE SERPENT-PRINCESS.

(A CHINESE CHRISTMAS STORY.)

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL BY WONG CHIN FOO.



INTRODUCTION.

THE Chinese thoroughly believe the Darwinian theory of human evolution from lower animals. The evolutionary maxim of occasional reversion to degraded ancestral types is also a part of every Chinaman's creed. "Pon Ko Wong," the creator of heaven and earth according to Celestial theology, is constantly watching the actions of all his creatures, even to the smallest. He prolongs their lives and advances their conditions when their actions deserve it. If an ape of the forests has been exceptionally good and kind to his fellows and does not destroy life, intentionally or otherwise, his own life is prolonged until he breaks a law and is then punished by death. Should he continue ten thousand years innocent and good he may transform himself into a higher order of being until he reaches the rank of man, and then of a god. But a transgression sends him back to his animal condition.

The sharks, whales, tortoises, serpents, and many other creatures are given this privilege, provided they live harmlessly for ten thousand years. Many of the national stories of China are founded upon these legends, corresponding to the European traditions of wehr-wolves and mermaids. But whatever powers these Chinese monstrosities possess, they are always limited to their own domain. There are whole cities and empires in human shape at the bottom of the sea, according to Chinese sages and romancers, which are creatures of the deep transfigured by long virtue. Yet they can not live upon the

land. One must dive to the ocean bottom to find them. And the land animals who have metamorphosed into human form are closely restricted to their proper realm.

The following story is universally believed by the Chinese—to such an extent that the principal figure in it was deified (as was Joss, the historical warrior), a few centuries ago, upon the breaking of the bounds of the Great Yellow River, along whose banks are many temples and images of Poh Yuin Ko. This story is one of the favorite subjects of the famous "Kiang Kon Jin"—those wandering minstrel tale-tellers who entertain listening crowds, particularly during the festivals of La Bo that end and begin the year. The month of merry-making at that time closely parallels the Christmas and New Year holidays of the West. But the Chinese Christmas celebrates the departure of the gods, while the Christian Christmas honors the coming of one. Upon the fifteenth day of the twelfth moon the gods all ascend from earth to heaven for a grand convention of

deities, and remain away until the middle of the next moon. Then the Middle Kingdom, released from all hideous and avenging divinities, whose watchful jealousy determines human fate, enjoys a vacation from the reign of the gods. Festivities continue for a month. Pastries, lined with nuts and sweetmeats, are the common diet. Dancing, song and games transform two-thirds of Asia to a carnival scene. And to the groups of people clustering under red lanterns in the open air, the roving minstrels tell many a story of gods and men, without restraint, for there are then no gods to overhear the things said of them. Gather about me in quiet, friends, and I will, like them, tell you the strange story of Poh Yuin Ko.

I.

IN the village of San Yon, near the Poh Yuin mountains, in the province of Kwong Si, lived a retired mandarin of the fourth grade, Whey Su Toy. His home was a rich estate that he had bought with his wife, and many a happy year had blessed his house. But now he was getting old, like his once beautiful wife, and cares began to weigh upon the aged couple because of their only son, Whey Goon, for he was nineteen years of age and had not yet married. Whey Goon was talented, handsome, and a loyal child of his worthy parents, but the time had come when the son of a wealthy family should have wedded and taught his wife the duties of filial love toward his aged father and mother. They constantly implored him to choose a girl for his wife. Always he listened dutifully to their pleadings, and bowed submission to the desire of his fond parents, but never said whom he would marry. The mystery of his refusal to be wedded deeply pained the hearts of Whey Su Toy and his wife, as no reason could be obtained for his reluctance and no promise of a time when he would fulfill the customs of his people. And yet the charms of lovely maidens seemed no less sweet to him than to all other youths.

"His twentieth year is nigh," sobbed his gray mother to her husband one night, as they were talking of their son, "and then he will be called a bachelor. Even our own relatives will shun and despise him. They will say that we can not find

him a wife. They will say no family will give him their daughter. They will say that his reputation is so and so. Oh, High Heavens, how shall we get him married without force?"

Whey Su Toy listened and thought, but said nothing. He rose and slowly paced the floor, drawing great puffs of smoke from his long-stemmed water pipe. Presently he put down his pipe and went out into the cool darkness of his gardens to soften his reflections. All was still under the glittering heavens, and the perfume of the flowers floated like an unseen cloud through the air. But his mind was troubled like a peach orchard shaken in the wind. On the other side of the blossoming grounds, at the ancestral Ting, were the chambers of his son, shining with the light of his presence, yet filled with loneliness when they should be happy with a bride. In his musings the father approached the cloisters of Whey Goon, and through the closed door he was surprised to hear soft voices within.

"My son was alone but half an hour ago," said Whey Su Toy to himself. "I have seen no one enter the gate, and besides it was locked. How came his visitors here?"

With puzzled thoughts he gently neared the lattice window, which was glazed with thin sheets of paper. With the tip of his tongue he wet the paper, and silently made a small hole in the window. Looking through, he was no less delighted than as



tonished. There sat Whey Goon, the youth whom no girl could captivate, in a large mahogany chair. The book which he had been reading was dropped on one side, and a beautiful young maiden, with arching almond eyes and creamy skin, dressed in lustrous silks, was sitting on his knees talking to him with musical sweetness, and it was evident that her conversation was highly interesting.

"No wonder, no wonder," grunted the happy old man, as he hastily retreated to report the discovery to his wife. "No wonder he refused to select a girl from our acquaintances when he is in love with such a beautiful one. But why did he not tell us? No family could refuse his request and ours to marry into the name and estate of Whey Su Toy." Still chuckling with joy at the happy solution of their troubles, he rushed into his wife's presence. For several minutes she could not understand his sudden change, so heartily did he giggle and laugh, shaking his sides with delight. At length he spoke and told her what he had seen.

The old lady was incredulous.

"How can it be possible, papa," she said, when neither I nor any of the servants have seen any one enter, and so attractive a young girl could not enter the walls of this house unobserved?"*

"But, mother," replied the happy old gentleman, "Love is a very secret thing, you know, and can walk through stone walls. Could he not have bribed the servants? Our eyes are old, and young love does many wonders."

"But who can she be?" queried the still doubting wife. "Have you ever seen such a girl about here? Know you any man who has such a daughter?"

"How could I? Though I am old I am only a man. How can a man see the daughters of other men? Can he enter the forbidden



chambers? That is the business of women, to find each other out and gossip your hours away."

"That is true, papa," said Madame Whey, rising from her low blue-cushioned seat. "I will visit Goon's room and question both of them. He must give me reasons for hiding the secret from his loving mother who has been dying of anxiety, and he must tell me her family."

II.

Now the manner of Whey Goon's discovery of his beautiful beloved one was this. On the twenty-third day of the third moon, the great *Zoo Yoon* (ancestors) holiday, Whey Goon, like all other dutiful children of great families, went out to the graves of his august ancestors to offer sacrifices for their peace, to burn incense sticks and papers, and to leave dainty morsels for the spirits of the dead. For seven generations his fathers and mothers had been buried on the plains near the mountain of Poh Yuin. Thither, with all the young of the village, went handsome Whey Goon, with leisure steps, carrying a willow basket of roasted chickens and other meat offerings. There were many roundly mounded graves to decorate, and some were almost obliterated by age, except for the crumbling tombstones. It was late before

* Wealthy country places in China are walled with a high inclosure of brick or stone, having but one gate, which is locked at night.



he made the obeisance and the *K'o Tow* (knocking the forehead) before the last of the graves and made the little offerings, and as he packed his basket for home it began to rain. On the way he noticed a beautiful young girl coming toward him. Her tiny feet were encased in pretty red satin slippers that could not have measured more than two inches. She was fashionably dressed in gorgeous silks. Her raven black hair contrasted charmingly with her soft white skin tinted with pink like the precious lining of shells. Her little cherry lips were parted enough to show two rows of perfect pearls. The sparkling of her eyes made Whey Goon tremble with admiration. He faltered with unstable steps and dumbly gazed in rapture at so fair a vision. She was followed by a smaller and younger girl who seemed her servant, and carried a small white basket like his own. She passed by him as if journeying toward the mountain, but Whey stood mutely riveted to the ground as if pierced by a lightning stroke.

"What can so lovely a beauty do in this rain, on the lonely mountain road, with neither sedan-chair nor umbrella?" thought Whey Goon. Then rushing to overtake her he called out, "*Cean Zean*" ("Sweet Miss").

At this she turned slightly toward him and looked with sternness at Whey Goon, as if to say, "How dare you disturb me?" But

seeing the comely youth bowing politely her lips and eyes changed to a fascinating smile.

"I see, *Cean Zean*," continued her brave admirer, "that it rains now. Please accept this umbrella," handing her his own protection from the storm.

"Oh, how kind you are, *Ceon Goon* (unmarried youth)," replied the blushing girl, as she took it with her perfumed hand, "but you will be wet yourself."

"Never mind. Rain is good for a man. May *Cean Zean* proceed peacefully on her journey," answered Whey Goon, bowing to leave her.

And now the maiden was as agitated as the youth. With a smile like the opening of a lotus bud, she said, "Thy august name, please?"

"My humble house is called Whey, and I am named Goon. And thine?"

"Poh Yuin Ko," she softly answered. "Whey *Ceon Goon* may get his umbrella by calling to-morrow evening at sundown at my house," she continued, blushing like a peach flower.

"Where, *Cean Zean*?" asked the delighted youth.

"My house is at Nan Ling Poh, reached through San Qui Tow."

This name astonished Whey Goon, for no living man had ever been able to enter Nan Ling Poh. Vast forests surrounded it. The only way was by dangerous precipices, along a chasm called San Qui Tow, meaning "Death's Mysterious Alley," for it was inhabited by frightful monsters. Many men had found death there, but none ever penetrated the horrible pass to the lonely mountain and returned.

"Why, men never come back from there," gasped Whey Goon.

"That is because they do not know how to go and come," replied the woman, calmly. "When you go through San Qui Tow, if any one calls you, no matter how familiar the voice, do not answer, nor even look around, and you will safely reach my home. Reveal the secret to no man. Only my own family know it, but your kindness leads me to confide in you. You can come or not as you choose. If you come not to-morrow evening I shall send the umbrella to you."

Whey Goon bowed his promise to call upon her, and with interchange of eloquent glances and smiles they separated. How

could any youth refrain from being captured by so godlike a creature? How could he know that her fresh features that seemed so young were *thousands of years old*?

III.

WHEY GOON's bed was sleepless that long night, and the day traveled at slow palanquin pace. As soon as the west devoured the sun, he went to the village Diz Jow, or barber, and had his head, eyelids and ear-openings shaved and a new braid and tassel attached to his queue. The thick soles of his silk shoes were newly whitewashed. Then he set out upon his mountain journey to obtain his umbrella, for an umbrella is sometimes highly valued by a youth.

It was fully fourteen li (four miles) to Nan Ling Poh, and all the way was crooked, wild and dangerous. Through the dense forests he boldly jogged until he entered the famous mountain pass whose deep cañon was rightly named "The Mysterious Alley of Death," for every venturesome tourist or farmer who had gone there had never been seen again. Not even the bones were found. It was supposed that scaly dragons fed on them. It was certain that at the bottom of that long chasm a snake-like trail wound among yawning caverns, shaded by thick woods, and fresh footsteps could always be seen there. Had Whey Goon known the horrible things connected with this gulch in the memories of old residents it is doubtful if he would have hazarded the journey, especially at night. But lovers know not caution. As his still steps carefully followed the trodden trail all was

silent as the dead. Even the flocks of night-birds, that darted through the grim moonlight above him or moved among the black branches of trees, seemed to be obeying a command of quiet. To brace his boldness he began to sing aloud the national love song of China, the "Yan Ko Neon":

"Yan yuet ko neon beat ye bear
Ur neon tow yaen chay fa yow,
How ye ko koo neon pol fa tai,
Ku tien lai pot tren san ye hai."

Here he was interrupted. His mother called him by name among the trees to his left. Whey Goon stopped to answer her, but remembered the girl's warning, and knew it was only an allurement. With trembling legs he trotted on faster, commencing again the love song. Presently he heard noises as if made by a shower of hail-stones in the dense woods around him. Then he heard voices: "Whey Goon! Why answer you not your own mother's call?" and "I am thy friend and would aid thee," and another, "Let him alone, he must be one of us in the secret."

Regardless of all he plunged ahead. The rushing and hissing riots among the trees were succeeded by strange spectres. Upon the road just in front of him appeared a band of fantastic creatures with human heads and bodies of wild beasts. There were tortoises, and serpents having human faces and animal bodies. Whey Goon began to fear that the lovely girl was a siren plotting his





destruction. But he bravely advanced and the entire company bowed politely in silence as he passed. A great, black boa with a man's head flourished its monstrous tail out of his way. Every hole was the hiding place of some uncouth form, and all poured out to view in wonder the intruder who had learned the passport. Had he spoken one word he would have been divided among a hundred maws.

Tremblingly he climbed through the chilling chasm toward the mountain-home of Poh Yuin Ko. At last passing through a graceful little grove of Shoon Pok (a sacred pine) he beheld a white marble mansion gleaming in the starlight like a structure of moonbeams. On the southern slope of the mountain, in front of the palace were fine grand old firs in a majestic line, like royal guards. About the marble edifice was a huge square wall with a jet black gate adorned on either side by a great stone lion.

A shower of cold perspiration wet his face as Whey Goon gently knocked at the gate.

The little servant of the day before opened the door and eyed him curiously.

"Is this Miss Poh Yuin Ko's mansion?" inquired Whey Goon.

"Yes, sir," returned the tiny attendant.

"Is she in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Anybody else in the house?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is my umbrella in?" impatiently snapped the youth, provoked at the monotonous answers with no invitation to enter.

"Yes, sir," the little girl replied again and ran back into the house. Soon she returned and said, "Whey Ceon Goon, my mis-

tress is waiting to receive you at your pleasure."

The great ebony gates were swung open by a venerable gigantic servant who evidently was master of the house, though he said not a word. Through a paradise of flowers and rare plants, through hillsides of enchanting fragrance and fountains musically gurgling in streams of crystal, captivating even the moonlight to their embrace, through avenues of luscious fruit that shone in yellow among myriads of dwarf trees—through these the little maid led Whey Goon with dilating eyes to the doorway of the palace. There Poh Yuin Ko stood to receive him. The tender looks with which she greeted him and the eager devotion with which he followed every movement of her beautiful form told unspeakable tales of love.

IV.

WHILE the queen of the weird mountains is conducting her heroic lover through her home we may silently follow them and note



its marvelous beauties. So lavish a wonderland must descend from a royal lineage, any one could see. There are heirlooms and treasures coming from ages too remote to trace. Even Poh Yuin Ko could not explain their origin if she would, for her parents died many cycles ago, *when she was very young.*

The palace, gorgeous and grand as it is, seems chiseled from a single stupendous block of white marble. The halls, of polished marble, gleam with inlaid agate and malachite. The tables and seats are all of delicate green jade, shaped like trays and barrels, and carved in exquisite designs. The upholstery has quaint patterns, more ancient than the most treasured royal cushions. Bamboo mats, of rainbow colors, illumine the floors. Instead of paintings on the walls hang great clusters of fresh flowers and fruit, suspended by red silk cords. In the main parlor presides an immense bronze figure of Buddha, surrounded by lesser saints, and before it stands a sacrificial altar, also of solid jade.

The apartments used by Poh Yuin Ko herself are most astonishing of all, for they seem fashioned as by a queen of nature. Her bedstead, with elaborate carvings, is made from one piece of purest marble, and covered with a profusion of silk textures. The chairs are ingeniously wrought of leaves and reeds, and the floors yield softly to the feet in a depth of silken mats. Six young girls remain in this room playing reed instruments in delicious melodies as quaint as the sighing of winds through a wilderness of rushes. The music is ever changing in an endless variety of enchanting lullabies and symphonies. Now and then the fairy-like players rise from their jade seats and move about in pretty revolutions, changing places so deftly that they seem to be scores instead

of only six, quickening the music to match their lively paces. In the dining-hall rise tempting stores of grains, fruits, and vegetables, but not a smell of meat, for meat or wine never enters here.



It is not surprising that Whey Goon was infatuated with the queen of this curious palace. She was arrayed in silken robes, as blue as the unclouded sky, and embroidered with jewels. The great buttons were radiant diamonds. The hood upon her forehead was decked with rubies and pearls like the crown of an emperor. With modest simplicity Poh Yuin Ko gently placed her tiny white hand glittering with gems into that of the enchanted youth, and led him coquetishly toward a sumptuous settee where the tiny maid was bidden to serve tea for his refreshment. Whey Goon was still timid, with a vague feeling of hallucination and dread, as if he had unwittingly climbed into the chambers of a goddess and would be punished for the outrage. But Poh Yuin Ko reassured him with tender conversation.

"I thank you for your kindness," said Whey Goon, as the tiny teacups scattered his fatigue and fright.

"Ceon Goon, for what?" asked the beautiful girl.

"That secret."

"Indeed," smiled she. "Perhaps I should thank you for



traveling so far. You have shown, most noble one, that you are brave as well as kind."

"It would be happiness to die for one so charming and good." The tea had now fanned his love to a passion that was not daunted by the magnificence about him.

At these words, which sank like an arrow into the heaving bosom of the lovely girl, she blushed, and her eyes were fastened on the floor in silence. Then she shyly spoke. "Well, it is a secret I have never confided to any one but you. I know not why I felt sure that you would keep it and come. Now I know I can trust you fully."

"I thank your Sweetness for her distinguished regards. But who were the individuals I met at the base of the mountain?"

A knock at the door prevented the answer. Poh Yuin Ko rose to admit the tall gray man with a tray full of refreshments. With her own hands she prepared a green jade stand and laid the tempting repast before Whey Goon. His attention was absorbed by the delicious viands, the weird music that entered from the adjoining room, and the

splendors of the place, and he forgot his question.

They ate sweetmeats and fruits, and drank delicious juices. It was past midnight when he rose as if to return home. At this motion the beautiful girl begged him to remain until the next day, and the moisture in her eyes showed her earnestness.

"But the old folks would die of anxiety," said Whey Goon, "for I told them not where I was going."

Poh Yuin Ko had never known the love of parents, but being well educated, she knew it would be a violation of the sacred laws of the sages to persuade a man to offend or worry his father and mother.

"I must, then, yield," she replied. "But to-morrow evening, if you wish to come, I will bring you in my own carriage, if you will not reveal me or my secrets."

"I would delight, fair one, to come as often as I may, and all secrets will be treasured in my heart."

"Noble *Ceon*," said she, "it shall be so. Close now your eyes, and open them not till I bid you."

Whey Goon shut out the splendor from his eyes. There was a swift whirling of wind about him, and a tossing sensation, but Poh Yuin Ko seemed still sitting beside him, with her hand in his.

"Now open," said her sweet voice.

Whey Goon was astounded to find himself standing in his own room alone, his candle, burning as usual where the servant placed it by his bed, looking as if it had been long consuming.

"Have I dreamed?" said Whey Goon to himself. "I should be asleep in bed, for the candle has burned low."



But his white-soled boots still showed the mud of that hideous cañon, and his *mock qua* still bore the cluster of fragrant mountain flowers that her dainty fingers had attached to his coat.

"Perhaps she is a spirit. But spirits do not have such perfumed hands as the one I held. A monster? Impossible, or she would not have recognized the duties of a son. She must be a deity seeking to reward the good. But a goddess would not show love to a man. She has wonderful powers and beauty. What is she? Well, I care not. I love her. I love her more than all the world. Whether she be beast, human, or spirit, or all three, I will love her the same. Is there any man or woman who is not also an animal and a ghost?"

V.

THE next evening, Poh Yuin Ko suddenly appeared to him in his room, as she promised. The dainty prolongings of their greeting showed they were already skilled in the arts of love.

"Are you ready now, my hero?" sweetly asked the enchantress.

"Yes, my pretty one," said Whey Goon; "and I have told the old folks that I expect to remain out all the evening, so they will not fret."

"That was very kind, dear *Ceon*. Now close the eyes." A swift rushing of air passed by, and they were in the mountain palace. "Now waken, my Noble."

This time Whey Goon was introduced to all the inmates, and shown through the whole palace, grander than any mandarin's mansion that he ever saw. He concluded that his charmer was the daughter of either a monarch or a fabulously wealthy merchant. Such lavishness of riches could not be inferior to the Emperor's grandest palace. To be sure, the vegetarian diet was unusual to Whey Goon. His palate relished roasted chickens and pigs, ducks' livers and feet, sharks' fins, and many other fleshy dainties. And wines and spirits to him tasted good, yet they were not admitted to her household. But the infinite varieties of breads, preserves, roots, and fruits solaced him. He would be content to live there always, even though he could learn nothing of her ancestry.

In a few days they were married, for Poh

Yuin Ko was queen of her mountain, and could act regardless of the delays and ceremonies of the lowlands. Their wedding was very simple. Holding each other by the hand they knelt before the towering bronze



Buddha, and the gray old attendant waved three green boughs, of fir, pine and oak, each three times over their heads. Then they rose and embraced each other thrice, and for kisses each tried to bite the other's neck. After this conclusion of the ceremony they sat on a long jade table and were bounteously served with a feast of delicacies, while all the time quaint reed music and pretty movements of the players surrounded them with sweet sounds. Their happy wedded life was spent entirely in the mountain palace, but only the dark hemisphere of time was theirs together, as Whey Goon was at his parents' home throughout the day.

VI.

UPON tip-toes the old lady and her dear husband slipped to the window of Whey Goon's chamber, and through the same little aperture they peeped. But no one was to be seen. Even their son had gone.

"That is very strange," said the perplexed father. "I know I saw Goon and a pretty girl there a few minutes ago. Where could they have gone?" They entered the room. The light was there, the bed untouched, and all in orderly condition, but neither boy nor girl. They sought the outer gate. It was securely locked as usual. They woke the servants. Nothing could be learned from them except that they fastened the doors

and fixed Whey Goon's room for his use as every night.

"You must have been deceived, papa," said the old lady.

Whey Su Toy shook his head and said nothing. He took a lantern and tried to find his son among the flower bushes and through the yard. As he returned unsuccessful to the house he said: "Mother, it is a vision from the gods. I know now that Heaven says our boy will be married soon and to a very beautiful girl. I *know* that I saw him holding a most handsome and cultured young lady in his lap. He is probably now at her home."

The old couple then thoughtfully retreated to their own room to await the morrow when they would learn all from the boy.

VII.

THAT evening as Poh Yuin Ko and Whey Goon were happily talking, she suddenly began calculating upon her finger-tips and said in excitement:

"Why, this is the ninth day of the ninth moon. I should not have gone out, for it is the sacred memorial day of our family, when I ought to have remained indoors."

Again she rapidly counted upon her fingers, and her face was pale as she said to the frightened Whey Goon, "My lord, an old man saw you and me together in your room. Who is he?"

Whey was white as milk. "It must be my father, formerly Mandarin of Dan You Foo. If he saw us there will be trouble."

"Do not be alarmed. I will manage it," said she, and left him.

Soon she returned and asked: "Do you know any unprincipled rich man who might buy this palace? If so, bring him here to-morrow. I will sell it to him, and we will move to a great city, in a fine house, where we will invite your parents. When they see us living happily in luxury they will forgive us both."

"Capital," replied Whey Goon in delight. "You are as wise as you are beautiful. I know a mean pawnbroker, immensely rich, Ching Ming. He cheats men, women and children out of

their possessions and is hated by all. But how shall I get him here?"

"Give him this little arrow. It will pass him safely, or any one who has it."

Ching Ming gloated in the opportunity of loaning money to a fair young lady on her costly mansion. Even the dragon's chasm frightened him not, and when he saw the palace he was inwardly boiling with envy of it.

Poh Yuin Ko adroitly exacted from him a sum many times as large as he first offered, and then increased it by giving Ching Ming an absolute sale of the palace and grounds.

Ching Ming went among all his friends to raise the enormous sum, saying the mansion and grounds were richer than the emperor's, and they would combine in a syndicate to sell it to him at a great advance.

With this Poh Yuin Ko bought a rich estate in the beautiful city of Soo Chow, hundreds of li away, and there they made their home with the happy blessing of Whey Goon's parents.

When Ching Ming woke the next morning in his mansion, he found himself sleeping in a vast cave. His palace had faded into a mountain cliff. His soft bed of silk was a pile of grass. The elegant furniture was transformed to boulders. Only the five great fir trees remained. All else was wild nature.

Poh Yuin Ko would give no account of her family, or her wealth, either to Whey Goon or to his parents, but they were satisfied with her beauty and goodness. Her happy marriage with Whey Goon lasted for many years. Two sons were born to them. Poh Yuin Ko made them many beautiful toys. Their kites were always shaped in queer forms with curious faces on them, many having the countenances of strange creatures which, she told her children, were very glad to fly among men in the cities, and should never be roughly treated, for they had souls that struggled hard to be human, and would indeed some time be beautiful men and women.



VIII.

UPON the fortieth anniversary of their marriage a grand banquet was given by Whey Goon and his wife. All the leading citizens of Soo Chow were present to congratulate them and to enjoy their hospitality. It was a merry celebration, and to please the guests their ordinary innocent diet of fruits and vegetables was augmented by meats of all kinds, as well as wines and spirits. Some of the dignitaries who honored the occasion insisted that the hostess, still petite and beautiful as ever, share the whole course of the feast with them, partaking of the crisp chickens' wings and the white slices of pork, and drinking their health in orange wine and rice brandy. During her whole life she had never touched meat or fermented drink, for they had been forbidden her long ago, but to please her friends she now freely indulged. In fear of something unladylike she hastened to her chamber and threw herself in a dazed condition upon her elegant couch. Her husband followed his beloved one, and entered her room with vague feelings of concern.

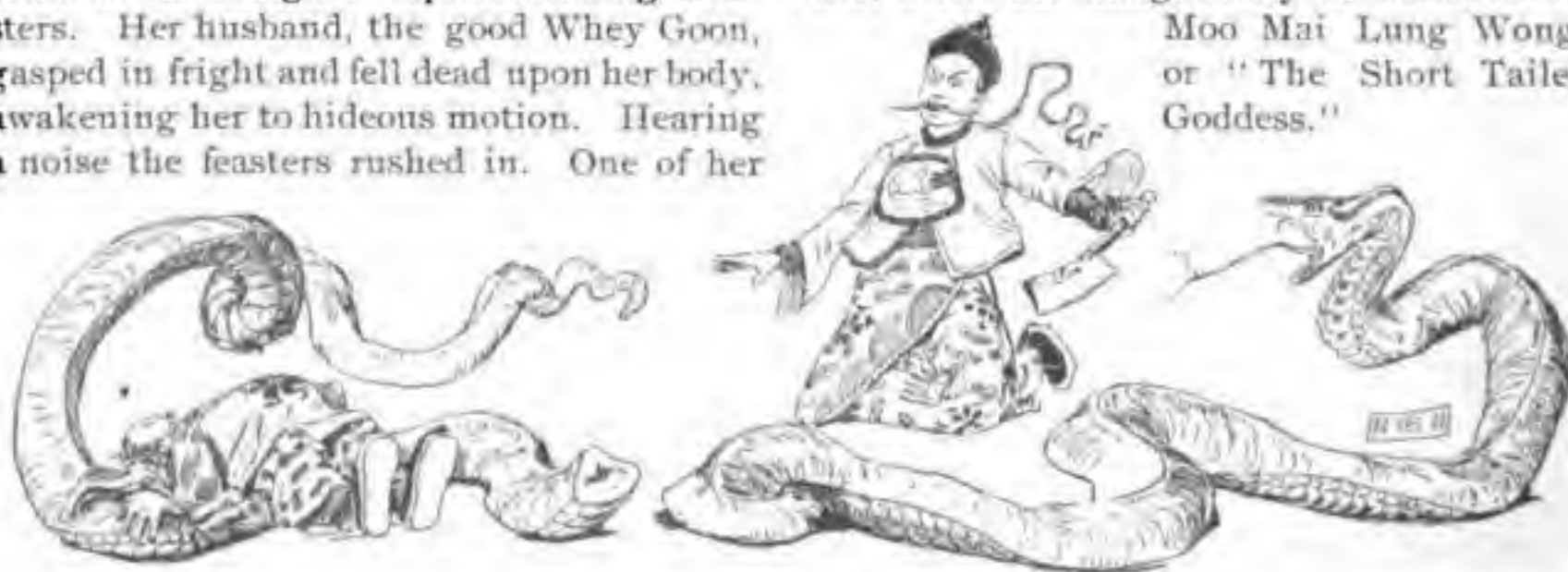
Merciful heavens! Instead of his beautiful wife, upon the carved bedstead was the head and neck of a monster white serpent, whose long body coiled horribly all about the room. Poh Yuin Ko had been transformed by one transgression back to her original self—the great serpent of the Poh Yuin mountains, where for thousands of years she had reigned supreme among monsters. Her husband, the good Whey Goon, gasped in fright and fell dead upon her body, awakening her to hideous motion. Hearing a noise the feasters rushed in. One of her



sons seized an axe, saying the monster had killed his father, and with a single frenzied blow severed her tail. Hissing in agony the serpent plunged out and away, away like an arrow to the Poh Yuin mountains.

And ever since, when the memory of her lost tail torments her, she thrashes about in the mountain, and her tortures cause the waters of the Great Yellow River rising there to overflow and drown the people about Soo Chow. And the people erect temples along the banks of the Great Yellow River to pacify her, where her images may be found called

Moo Mai Lung Wong,
or "The Short Tailed
Goddess."



IN THE HEADSMAN'S ROOM.

BY OCTAVE THANET.

"IF you care to risk your neck on the Mont d'Azi, turn in for a rest at St. Ferréol."

This is what my friend, Maurice de Chagny, said to me, on the eve of my starting for a sketching tour in Haute Savoy.

My sketches, I may explain, are of no earthly account to any one save the artist; all the same, I like to make them.

"The *château*," Maurice went on, "is a queer old barracks; but the old furniture may interest you, and there used to be some china to make your eyes shine, Henri Deux cups and a Palissy and Rouen dish or two and a lot of Meissen—but it is more than likely that Constance has had to sell all her *bimbelots*, poor child!"

"Does the *château* belong to the Countess Constance?" said I; and to save my life, I could not help a queer little shake in my voice. To tell the truth, I was desperately in love with the countess, and she had made an end of me only three days before.

"Why, yes," said Maurice, "but she is here, and the *château* is there; and I'll give you a card to old Michael—if you want a figure for an ancient retainer, Monty, there's one!" He was so busy scrawling over his card that he did not see my face. I felt myself growing hot; but it was easier to take the card than to explain why I could not avail myself of the countess' hospitality.

"There was a talk of selling the *château*," said Maurice, "but Constance prefers to go out as a governess, first. Ah, my friend, I don't wonder. She is the last of her name, and they have owned that rock among the eagles for five centuries; and there are the old servants, Michael and Solange: bleak as the old *château* is, at least it is a roof over their heads, and the vines give them a pittance for their living. Constance shares what she has with them."

He spoke with a kind of bitter emotion; I knew that he had no money with which to keep his cousin, and his words, somehow, made more of a picture in my mind than he may have intended. I answered on impulse:

"She might rent the place, though."

"Who would want it?"

"I know a fellow that will—maybe—"

De Chagny may have suspected me, but the countess' polite and frigid sentences were not sticking in his brain (like icicles) as they were in mine; he wished well to my suit, the good Maurice, and would forward it if he could. I know he pressed me in his chubby little arms with true brotherly fervor when we parted.

After this the business arranged itself. In the person of William Grant (my London attorney) I leased the *château* St. Ferréol for one year.

Were the countess ever to discover my duplicity—I wriggled under the bedclothes when that awful vision came to me, sometimes, 'at dead of night! However, there was very little danger; and the consciousness of my useless and transient ownership was a comfort. Decidedly I needed comfort at that time. Imagine a young man of twenty-eight who has had a very good time with his youth and his money, and considers himself mightily experienced and beyond the reach of emotions; imagine this fellow flung out of all his imbecile vanities by meeting a young woman,—tall, beautiful, wearing the invisible but none the less sensible aureole of noble blood and nurture (*he* is the grandson of an honest American butcher, mind you), yet simple as a child and with a child's grand beliefs and exactions. There you have my case. My father left me a great fortune; for the rest, I was a little fellow, with those odious good looks that remind one of the busts in a barber's window, almond-shaped dark blue eyes, long lashes, a low forehead, a straight nose, an oval face, and a moustache which, at this period, I had the incredible folly to wax at the ends. Really I am a muscular little man and tough as a wildcat; but my poor mother and my sister, whose husband had died of consumption, were forever loading me with top-coats and cautioning my man about me. I swear François, himself, was an affectation forced on me by those two. He was to look after my health, confound him!

To see a fellow thus guarded, like a tame mouse, was enough of itself to prejudice any woman of spirit. And to complete my disadvantages, I had trivial tastes: I sketched, I played (atrociously) on the violin, I was a connoisseur in china and *cinq cent* furniture. Often I felt that Constance might have forgiven positive vices; but she supposed me a creature devoid the commonest virile instincts.

Therefore I buried myself in the Savoy Mountains, ready to tempt an avalanche. Of course I had not the remotest idea of ever visiting the *château*, yet I explored Mont d'Azi. No harm in seeing the place. One day something happened. I got lost. Night was coming on; indeed, when, after an hour's wondering, I ran against a weather beaten finger-post, it was necessary to light a match to read the direction.

The words were *À St. Ferréol*. A kind of thrill ran through my nerves. How could she ever be the wiser if I went there to her house—why, it was *my* house—for a night, as Maurice's friend? There was no name on the card, I was simply his "friend." I could, of course, go as William Grant; but, in that case, I might be described, and my precious secret would be lost. The choice lay between St. Ferréol and a night on the rock, half frozen, with the owls, foxes, and such gentry for company. I took the path.

After all, the idea was not without a certain charm. "Her house—and mine," I muttered to myself, climbing up the mountain side. Suddenly the dense pines ended, and I saw the vineyard stepping up the mountain, the bare rock topping the vines, and perched on the rock, the *château* St. Ferréol.

Lichens had stained the stone, richly, and ivy wrapped the walls, and swung banner-wise over the capitals. So well had those old Romanesque architects builded, that the dark pile with its round towers and pointed roofs loomed against the sunset as if of yesterday; but there were a hundred scars of poverty and time about the grounds, and the *château* itself, did one draw nearer. My heart beat fast as I entered the gateway, where the stone griffins frowned in vain. One had dropped his head, which frowned up out of the weeds. I crossed the court. No creature was visible. Approaching the more modern portion of the house, an addi-

tion in the later gothic style (really a blot on the plan), I found the door. It was of oak, the usual design, barred with iron. Rust had eaten into the bars, as it had into the brass of the curiously wrought serpent biting its tail, which served for a knocker.

My summons brought a gaping young Savoyard to the door. He ushered me into a noble vaulted hall, where an old man, on his knees, was rubbing the brass-work of an ancient saddle. A reddish brown Roman nose, and a few locks of silver white hair were all the features which his attitude revealed.

"This must be Michael, the Countess de St. Ferréol's faithful—ah—steward," said I, struggling after a polite term for his ambiguous position.

At once the old man rose, and made me a bow that would have done credit to a retainer of the great Louis.

"I am the countess' servant Michael," said he in very pure French; "how can I serve Monsieur?"

I handed him De Chagny's card.

Instantly, the man was transformed; the wrinkles in his old face shifted out of their knots into smiles, and his eyes beamed, while he welcomed me volubly: "Mon Dieu, Monsieur, I was afraid you were the new master, a rich English gentleman who rents the house—he has never been here. But a friend of M. Maurice, it would be a dark day, indeed, that we could not welcome him. Ah, but it is a poor place now, not like in the old count's time. All the house has is at your service, Monsieur." Here the old servant drew himself up with as much stateliness as if he were glittering in the gold-laced livery of "the old count," instead of wearing the breeches woven and made by Solange and a ragged jacket trimmed with moth-eaten fur. "Toby," he proclaimed, "thou idle young beast, see that Solange makes haste with the best supper she knows how to cook; and light a fire in the Headsman's chamber!"

Toby, whose mouth had been agape ever since my arrival, dropped his jaw lower still and rolled his eyes; but he said no word.

"*Va t'en!*" cried the old man, sharply. Toby got as far as the door: here some inward power twisted his head and his staring eyes back on us, again. Michael making a furious gesture, he disappeared. In a moment he returned, puffing. Between the

puffs came the words, "Solange says—a sin and a shame—Christian soul—*Ow!*" The last word was nearer a scream, for a hand with no apparent body swooped from behind the door and dragged the unfortunate lad off into outer darkness.

"Figure of a pig that thou art!" said a woman's voice in a fierce whisper. The rest was lost in a noise very like a slap, and loud sobs.

"She boxes his ears," remarked Michael calmly. "Solange has a heavy hand. I see you wonder at us, Monsieur, and assuredly there is reason. But I would have arranged—however, I believe in the truth, I. Though Solange is a fool, still, perhaps, it is better. Listen, then, Monsieur. The Headsman's chamber has a bad name, that is all. But I assure Monsieur that he will not be disturbed. On the word of a St. Ferréol." He bowed again with his grand air.

"What for, ghosts?"

Michael fidgeted with the bit of chamois skin in his hand; he almost wiped his brow with it.

"If you have a ghost, Michael, pray let me have a chance to see him," said I.

"Well, Monsieur, it is the Headsman's room. He has his picture on the tapestry."

"Does *he* haunt the room, walk and groan and wring his hands *comme les autres*?"

"Not exactly, Monsieur, no, he does not—he does not appear—at least—not in the room, Monsieur." Michael was visibly embarrassed; this time he did wipe his brow, distributing the brass polish impartially in streaks.

"But really, Michael," said I, growing interested, "if the ghost does not come into the room, where's the harm of sleeping there?"

Michael's sigh was deep enough for a groan: "He comes to the room below, Monsieur, and you hear him. You hear him all night!"

"What does he do?"

"He moves the furniture, Monsieur."

It was impossible not to smile; yet the poor old man was so desperately in earnest.

"I see Monsieur does not believe. But read. In a moment." He bowed and retired. Presently he returned. He had procured a strange old-fashioned salver on which was laid a folded paper.

I opened it and read what purported to be the experience of a certain René de—some-

thing, who decidedly wrote the worst hand in the world. But I managed to make out that he had spent the night in the Headsman's room; that he had been awakened by noises in the room below, so it appeared to him; that he had descended the stairs leading to this room (the noises continuing all the while); that he had opened the door of the room, and there was nothing; though, the second before, the noises had been like one moving all the furniture in the room. He had searched the room thoroughly, but he discovered nothing. Baffled, he returned to his chamber. No sooner did he cross the threshold than the noises recommenced. They were just as before, the scraping, rolling sounds, as of heavy furniture being moved. He took his pistol in one hand and his candle in the other, and again he stole down-stairs. The noises were the same. He opened the door. The room was still. He flashed his candle about, and then a stray blast of wind, through the open door, had extinguished the light; and instantly the noises were all around him, and the room shook. This was too much for René. *He* expresses it more decorously; but Michael told me that they heard him yell all over the castle; he shot off his pistol wildly and came plunging down the hall—"like a mad bull," said Michael.

"Certainly a thrilling narrative," I said, "but why do you give all the credit to the Headsman? Who was he, anyhow?"

"Monsieur," said Michael, "it is a long story, not a jest." It was plain Michael disapproved of my light tone. Still he was prevailed upon to sit down and tell the story while supper was preparing. Unconsciously the old man's language took a savor from the quaint speech of the ancient chronicler who had first reported the sin and doom of the Headsman. Some of the phrases cling to my ear; what I can not give is the quaver in Michael's voice, the gleam of his eye and the look of the ribbed and gnarled old hand that would waver in the air to emphasize the weirdest passages. The Headsman, Michael said, was the most powerful noble of the house of St. Ferréol. He had amassed a vast store of jewels and gold before he came to his barony, as a gentleman pirate, preying on the Spanish ships in company with other gentle pirates, French and English. After he became count, the story goes,

that he used this treasure to buy a great store of arms. At any rate, he rebelled against his liege lord of Savoy and had the misfortune, being defeated and wounded, to fall into the enemy's hands. With him, also wounded, was his sworn brother in arms, a neighboring noble, to whom he bore "a most marvelous affection." This noble had an only child, a daughter, betrothed to the Count de St. Ferréol's only son, and the day of their marriage was set. Being in such sad case, however, the two gentlemen made up their minds for death, since they were in the hands of their bitterest foe; but he, "wickedly choosing to inflict greater pains," said to St. Ferréol: "Life and lands and lordship shalt thou save, do thou this one thing. Die this man shall" (he pointed his mailed hand at the other noble knight, bound, and with blood on his armor), "whether or no; but *thou* mayst go free, do thou strike his caitiff head from his body!"

At first, the Count de St. Ferréol would not; but when his friend had pleaded with him, with tears, to do him this last good office, because thus he should succor and protect his daughter and perchance save the lives of many, nor, in the end, shorten his life no whit, since die he needs must, then, after a long while, the count, in great sorrow, and weeping very bitterly, consented. The two friends kissed each other, after which, the one who must die laid his head on the piece of log provided, and the count, with a single mighty stroke, "did give him release."

The miserable Headsman was free. According to Michael, his foe made a bitter gibe: "Let him go. There is no further fear of him, no knight will follow him, *now!*"

His first step was to go to the daughter of his friend and bring her ("nothing knowing of her father's case") to St. Ferréol. There he married her presently to his son. He enforced silence on the men-at-arms who had been with him that evil day; and all the young couple knew was that the bride's father had been slain in the battle, "for the which the damsel made great moan," and which was sufficient excuse for absence of nuptial merry-making. On the wedding night, Monsieur, the count blessed the young pair, weeping much, and went away with his head hanging on his breast.

"That night"—Michael's lifted hand kept time with his solemn tones like the swinging of a church bell—"that night there was such a thunder storm as never was known, and in the morning they found the count hanging half out of his window killed by a thunderbolt. No, Monsieur, that is not all the story. There was a cup of poison on the table, and a letter begun to his son telling him how to preserve him his lands and wife, he, his father, had fallen into such sin; and so Father Gaspard, the priest at the castle, then said how it was plain that the good Lord, seeing that the poor count, unable to endure his suffering, was about to make a wicked end, had mercifully preserved his soul from the crime of self-murder."

"But the ghost?"

"Monsieur, *he* is the ghost; but this is the strange thing, my father had heard him, but *his* father knew nothing of him. But he came often enough, I know, in the late count's time."

"But why does he walk down here instead of in his room?"

Michael shrugged his shoulders. "Only he can tell. He began to walk here and to make noises in my father's time, and they have been growing worse ever since. But I hear Solange. Will Monsieur permit me to serve him?"

Michael's tale had produced an impression on me for which I can not account; I felt an inexplicable personal interest in this unfortunate ghost. At least the Headsman was a real human being who had sinned and suffered and been of such vivid and genuine quality that long after he was dust in the consecrated grave, which good père Gaspard doubtless secured for him, he still existed to his descendants as a ghost.

We were in the room where his ghostly revels were kept. Here, actually, he walked his rounds, not in the chamber above. Yet this was the every-day dining-room of the *château*. There was the same antique and decayed magnificence about this apartment as in all I had seen of the place. A worn Turkey carpet covered the floor. The embossed leather of the chair seats had cracked in holes, but their gabled and crocketed backs were beautiful specimens of *cinqcento*. The buffet was in the ugly and heavy style of the seventeenth century. Of all the treasure of plate and china which had

shone from its deep shelves, only a pair of brass candlesticks remained. The wall, which was wainscoted in oak, bristled with antlers, rusty armor and stuffed birds. There was a single picture in the room, a portrait in oils of a young girl. Too well I knew that charming poise of the head and those dusky eyes, though they were meeting mine with a kindlier welcome than they had ever given me before.

"You observe the portrait, Monsieur," said Michael; "it is my young mistress, painted in the old count's time. Ah, he spent the money royally while it lasted. Now, the last St. Ferréol is glad to rent the house of her fathers to a rich Englishman."

He glanced mournfully down the board, yet his old eyes involuntarily glistened, contemplating Solange's *plats*.

"Justice to all," he muttered, "the Englishman has sent quantities of provision to us, and bids us be always ready for him, with cooked victuals."

I persuaded Michael to help me with a bottle of wine. The more he drank the more doleful he grew. He explained to me why the dining-room was not shunned; it appeared that the ghost never did anything unless some one were sleeping in the chamber above.

"Ah, many and many a fine young gentleman has slept there in the old count's time," said Michael, "but never a one staid the whole night through. The only person who ever did it was the countess."

"The countess!" I exclaimed.

"My young mistress, Monsieur. Ah, she has the courage of the St. Ferréols! She will have it that the ghost means something by these noises—that he is trying to attract attention. The first night she slept there I watched outside in the hall. She did not know. The noise came. Then she comes out with her candle, pale, but calm, like the stars. I follow. She opens the door. All is quiet. Every chair is in its place. She stands there, and looks so sad, so kind and pitying, like the pictures of the saints. And, then, while I, pig that I am, am like to scream for fear, she blows out her candle. 'Now,' she cries, 'poor ghost, see, the light is out, come; I am a St. Ferréol, tell me why you come—I pity you.' But nothing came but the same noises, and Solange rushed in, screaming, with a light. That gave me an

idea. The rest of the time there was a light burning for *M. le Conte*. The countess never suspected anything. She slept there four nights longer, but he did not stir, nor will he for you, Monsieur. The light will burn."

She, alone, had spent night after night in that ghastly chamber for a ghost's sake, my high-hearted darling. Her sweet credulity seemed to bring her nearer to me, and, indeed, was there not a chance for me in the adventure? She would not despise the man who fathomed the mystery of the Headsman's room. Besides, in that case, it would be more than decent for me to write her the particulars. My brain went spinning down a vista of splendid possibilities.

"Michael," said I, "I don't want the light. I want to see the Headsman."

It was some time before Michael could believe that I was in earnest; when he did I was conscious that he regarded me with furtive compassion. "They can not tell what it is," he said, "nor can I, but it freezes the blood in one's skin to hear!" By this time, Solange's excellent supper was dispatched and I was exploring the room—finding nothing.

The wall gave out no hollow sound, the windows were grated. Michael obediently trotted at my heels, perking his nose over my shoulder and dropping tallow grease in my hair. Occasionally he shook his head and the candle in unison, assured me that the dead would mock at my precautions.

Had he a key? Yes, Monsieur. A young gentleman had tried that, a brave young man—but he jumped out of the window. The fireplace? There was always a fire there. M. René had talked of something coming down the fireplace, but he did not talk so now. Could the windows be locked? Without doubt, Monsieur; he thought that it was the young Breton captain, he with the red hair, who climbed up to lock them himself; anyhow it was the one who fell on his knees and called on all the saints.

Gloomier and gloomier Michael became, until I asked to be conducted to my chamber. He took me up the turret stair; and, I observed, remained modestly on the threshold. The room was large, bare, of an irregular octagon shape; and a musty odor exhaled from the faded tapestry on the walls. Michael whispered that the tapestry had

been woven for "the count," and represented the sea fights of his comrade and himself. He stretched a trembling finger towards the Headsman's shape. Then he crossed himself, promised me that his slumbers would be "of the lightest," bade me adieu, casting at the same time a sorrowful glance over my insignificant person, and bowed himself off into the shadows. His footsteps echoed quaveringly down the uncarpeted hall. They made a hollow, lonesome sound. My first care was to examine my revolver, blessing my American fancy for the weapon. Next I flared my candle over my new quarters, inch by inch, with the result of knowing that they had a fireplace, a broken buhl table, two Louis Quatorze chairs, and a bed uncomfortably like a sarcophagus, with its carved testers and purple velvet curtains, draped through the tarnished coronet at the top.

There were no nooks or crannies and no wardrobe, where a fraudulent goblin might hide. A fire blazed on the hearth. I went close up to the tapestry and studied the various portraits of the Headsman careering about the walls. The hangings were so faded and worn that I was only able to distinguish that the figure was in armor, and that the one head without a helmet had long hair. Again that strange sensation of belief in the ghost's existence, and pity for him, swept over me. I could understand Constance's feeling.

Dressed as I was, I threw myself on the bed. I had not the least intention of going to sleep; I was revolving the dreadful dilemma of the Headsman; I was wondering if there was any clue to these ethical conundrums; I was marveling over the gulf between our manners and codes and those of the dim past; I was very gravely demanding *his* opinion of the Headsman, who courteously lifted his indistinguishable face, while the slaughtered friend—or somebody else—turned somersaults on a boat keel—in short, I was asleep before I knew my drowsiness. Even ghosts can not keep a man awake who has climbed mountains all day.

I was awakened—I do not know the hour, but my candle was sputtering in its socket—and sat upright, clutching my revolver.

Simply a noise, the kind of noise which one would make, naturally, moving a chair. I listened. The noise ceased. It came

again. It ceased. It came the third time. "There are three chairs," said I, "Good Lord!"

I do not know why this fact or coincidence must set my pulses drumming, but it did.

Presently came the noise again, a long, creaking jar. Then a succession of bumps. I thought to myself that it was as though some one were moving the table and straining at the buffet. No sooner did this last noise cease than the same order was repeated. "Here goes," I thought, flinging off my shoes.

Pistol in one hand and candle in the other, like M. René, I crept down-stairs; all the while, chairs and table and side-board were pushed and flung and hurled, apparently, about the room below. Surely Michael and Solange, wherever their rooms, could not fail to hear this uproar!

In the hall outside I paused a second to combat the overpowering feeling of reality about the thing. And now the din on the other side the door swelled into a chaos of blows and thuds. It was exactly as if some one inside were hurling the furniture about the room. I flung the door wide open. The room was utterly still. My candle made an arrow of light across the carpet. There stood the three chairs close to the table; there was the buffet in its place. I had carelessly left my hat on the edge of the *buffet*. A motion would have dislodged it; there it lay unmoved.

I edged into the room. I thoroughly explored it, keeping my back well to the wall. There was absolutely no change in the position of anything. I went back to my room. Before I could lie down I heard the scraping of the chairs. Then came the noises as before, the chairs pushed back, the table moved, the tugging at the buffet. This time I went down in the dark, but I was carrying a candle and a match. I had put my pistol in my pocket.

The noises increased in fury, exactly as before.

I opened the door. They were louder than ever. Honestly, I did not dare stir lest I should be knocked over by the flying furniture. I scratched my match. As suddenly again I saw the quiet room, and the only noise was the beating of my own heart.

I may or may not be believed, it is no

matter ; I know that what I felt at that moment was neither fear nor excitement : it was an intense, uncontrollable, awe-struck sympathy for the ghost. Even while I jeered at myself, the feeling which twice before had overcome me partially now conquered everything else. "I will help you," I cried ; "tell me what you want !"

But only the silent room and the flickering light athwart the table came for answer. An idea occurred to me. I removed one of the chairs. Then I took a log lying in the chimney corner, and placed it directly in front of the *buffet*. And then I returned to my room.

My foot was hardly over the threshold before the chair scraped against the carpet, first one, then the other, then—it was not the noise of a chair drawn away, it was the clatter of a log of wood hurled against the hearth.

I raced down the stairs and flung the door open. I had no more doubts : the ghost was trying to move the buffet !

My lighted candle was still in my hand ; and I saw the chairs in their place, the log lying against the *buffet* ! "M. de St. Ferréol," I said solemnly, "if I am not right give me sign !" And with that, placing my candle on the table, I put my shoulders to the great hulk of oak and strained and tugged as lustily as ever the ghost had seemed to do. A shiver first, then a totter, and then—whether it was that some secret prop gave

way beneath, or a leg broke, or that I simply lifted the top-heavy monster out of balance—there was a crash which shook the solid walls as the buffet fell and broke asunder.

Michael got to the room before I could clear my eyes from the dust of centuries which seemed to be released. He rushed in, scared but faithful, and (determined to run no risks) armed with *two* candles.

"*Oh mon Dieu, des choses argent !*" ("Heaven's, look at the pieces of silver !") screamed Michael, tumbling on his knees with a loud cry. He fell on two of the candles and knocked the other out of my hand. We stood breathless in the darkness. It was very still.

"Michael," said I, "do you believe the poor count was trying to show this silver ?"

For answer Michael embraced my knees and kissed my trousers and wept, incoherently ; for there, out of the secret drawers with which the wretched, artful old buffet was crammed, had tumbled the gold and silver plate, worth a prince's ransom. My explanation is that the poor Headsman, who killed his best friend that he might save his estates to his family, must have seen this plate stowed away, during the French Revolution perhaps, and have been trying, ever since, to attract the family attention. Perhaps it is not the true clue. However, I know that the Headsman has rested in peace ever since, and will grudge him no ghostly honors, since I owe him my dear wife.

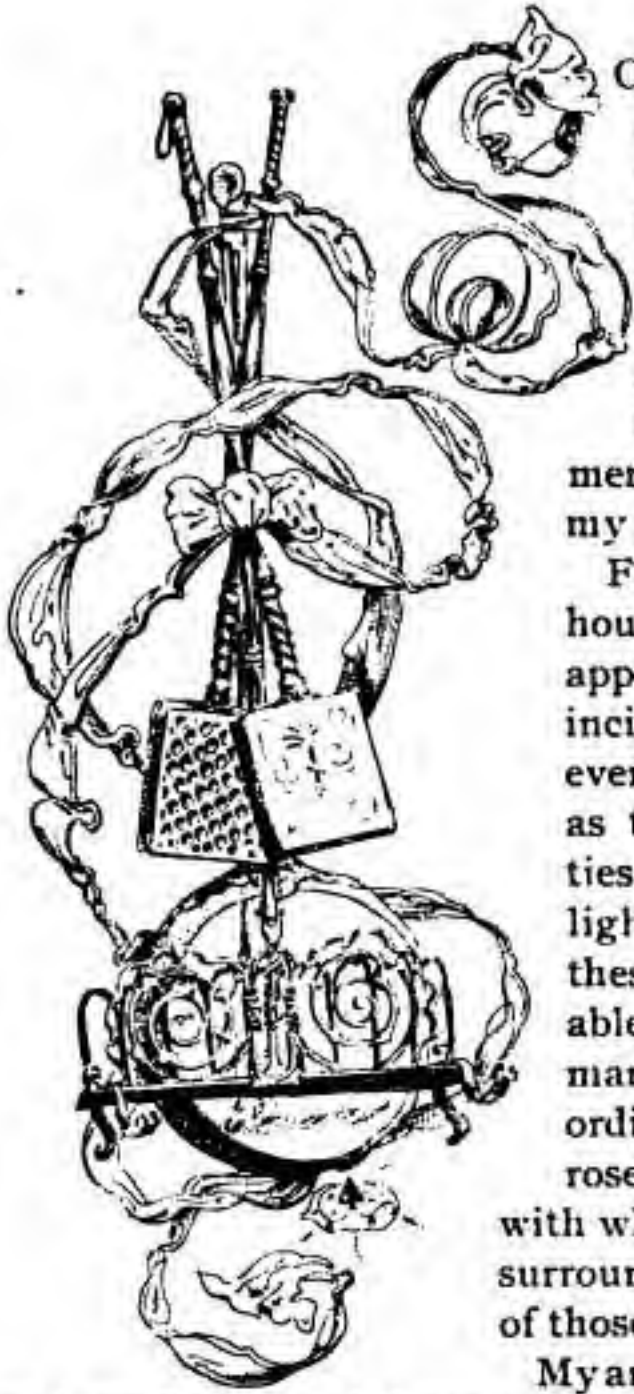
A CATCH.

BY RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

I SAID to Fate, Let be,
 Since I have done with thee,
 Or heap upon my head
 The ashes of the dead,—
 And huddle out of sight
 The thing that once was me.
 For when his head is white,
 And he is poor and old,
 'Tis time his grave was made ;
 Fetch mattock then, and spade,
 And let the bell be tolled.
 And so, sweet fool, good night !

SIX FEET OF ROMANCE.

BY DAN C. BEARD.



SOMETHING unaccountable had happened. A hand, a real *live hand*, in a long lace mitten that allowed the tapering white fingers with their pink tips to show, reached out of the surrounding haze!

To say that I was astonished is to describe in very mild terms the dazed state in which I sat and stared. Left alone in my studio, I had been examining some new treasures-trove in the shape of small household articles, mementos of the home life of last century, which it had been my good fortune to rescue from junk and attic rubbish.

From my earliest boyhood, ancient wearing apparel, old household and kitchen utensils, and antique furniture, have appealed to me with peculiar force, telling facts and relating incidents in such a plain, homely, but graphic manner of the every-day life of our ancestors, that I look upon them more as text-books than as curiosities; for it is only by the light of truth reflected from these objects that we are enabled to brush away the romance that tinges the most ordinary facts, or pierce the rose-hued atmosphere of fiction with which the perspective of years surrounds the commonest objects of those remote times.

My antique frying-pans, toasters, and waffle-irons all have very long handles, the andirons of the same date rear their massive brass heads several feet above their strong, wrought-iron cross-bars.

How plainly these things tell us of the great log fires that roared in their ample fire-places in the brave old days of our great-grandsires! How the reflected flames must have glistened in the polished brass knobs on the andirons, and cast a warm glow on the powdered wigs of courtly dames, sparkled on the hilts of young gallants' swords, and flushed the pretty faces of maids in their finery of stiff, pointed waists and rich flowered brocades!

I had been gazing especially, with a gratified, satisfied sense of ownership, at what I considered the gem of my find, an old-fashioned foot-stove.

This is not the ordinary tin box such as one finds among the carefully preserved relics of any well-cared-for colonial homestead. It is a foot-stove of more than ordinary beauty of form and make. The square box that forms the stove proper is of iron, hammered by hand into thin sheets, the top and sides of which are perforated with small holes arranged in complicated and intricate designs, while the framework which holds the box is made of quaintly



carved mahogany. The door forms one side of the stove, and it stood open, showing within the metal cup that still holds the ashes of coals which had glowed and burned over a hundred years ago.

I observed the top cross-pieces of the wooden frame, worn in their middle to thin strips by the generations of feet that



warmed their toes over the hot embers.

You know, when you look continuously and intently at one object for a long time, all your surroundings will become misty, indistinct, and finally disappear. That was the way with the old foot-stove as I gazed at it.

Down a hundred feet or more below me, Broadway's rumbling, bustling tide was beginning to ebb, the orange-colored gas jets had commenced to glimmer, and the purplish glare of the fierce electric lights made sputtering nebulae in the misty rain. But this I seemed to be aware of through an interior sense, for all my powers of physical sight were occupied in watching a most wonderful occurrence. A hand had reached out of the haze surrounding my foot-stove and taken the metal cup from the open door and vanished.

I can scarcely expect my readers to believe this, and I hardly believed the evidence of my own eyes, but there was my foot-stove empty! A circular mark in the dust covering the rusty iron floor of the stove alone bore witness of the recent presence of the metal cup.

I sat and stared blankly until aroused by the presence of the same beautiful, delicate feminine hand, which replaced the iron cup

IT IS A FOOT-STOVE OF MORE THAN ORDINARY BEAUTY.

in the stove, closed and latched the door, and melted away.

Thin threads of blue smoke streamed through the perforations of the iron box like incense, and I was conscious of the odor of burning wood, that awakened memories of



A HAND REACHED OUT OF THE HAZE AND TOOK THE METAL CUP.

an old Kentucky log house familiar to my boyhood ; but the house was forgotten when I saw materialized from the cloudy haze a *foot*—oh, such a dainty foot !

The quaint red silken shoe that incased this new visitor was latched over the instep with a silver buckle, and the shoe had the highest of high heels. The slender ankle, with its silken hose, that faded away in the surrounding mists, modestly hidden by the filmy lace of an overhanging skirt, was as delicate as the fairy foot in its quaintly shaped shoe, that now rested on the top of the well-worn cross-piece of the ancient foot-warmer.

There were two feet, as I could plainly see, side by side, absorbing the genial heat that filtered through the perforations from the glowing coals inside the box ; but they apparently remained only a sufficient time to assure their owner that the coals inside were warm and bright ; then

they were gone, and I heard, or thought I heard, the rustling of a stiff gown and skirts.

The hand was now again visible, this time covered with a red woolen mitten, and, grasping the handle of my foot-stove, it lifted it from the floor and moved off.

But all these unaccountable and wonderful occurrences were not sufficiently startling to blind me to the fact that my much-prized antique was about to be taken from me.

It was not my desire to break the continuity of such wonderful occurrences by any rash act ; but the loss of my treasure was not to be contemplated, and even the knowledge that it was in the possession of such fascinat-

ing hands and feet did not prevent me from hastily rising to follow it.

My memory fails to recall how it was we reached the ground without descending the long flight of stairs in the building. However, I was presently conscious of walking over uneven and unfamiliar pavements totally different from Broadway.

Right in front, and but a short distance ahead of me, tripped the red silken shoes, their high wooden heels tinkling over the frozen ground. Presently my attention was arrested and my wonder increased by

meeting a pair of yellow-topped boots, that I at once recognized as a pair that I had left hanging, along with some buckskin trousers, upon my studio wall.

I knew them at a glance, and their identification was complete when I saw the new heels, which I had had put on them, and the tear in the top of one made by the

struggles of a fat model in his frantic efforts to pull the boot-leg over his bulky calf.

(The leather in these ancient foot-coverings is so dry and brittle from age that unless great care is used it will tear like paper.)

I have always regarded these old boots with a feeling akin to awe, imagining that they must have been worn by some powdered and buckled hero like the "old-fashioned colonel" who "galloped through the white, infernal powder cloud;" but, if they had been upon the feet of a country bumpkin, they could scarcely have appeared to a worse advantage than they did as they hesitated and halted beside the little red shoes.



THERE WERE TWO FEET, SIDE BY SIDE, ABSORBING THE GENIAL HEAT.

With toes turned in, the boots shuffled uneasily about, almost tripping over each other in their embarrassment.

There is a witchery about a beautiful woman that envelops her like a mantle, reaching and covering even her feet. It is, in fact, as if she were surrounded by a peculiar atmosphere, which not only obscures or hides all defects of mind or body, but, at the same instant, brings into greater prominence all her exquisite loveliness.

It was probably a perception of this that made the boots so self-conscious. As for the high-heeled shoes, they behaved in a most coquettish manner, which apparently only tended to heighten rather than impair their charm.

However that may be, the rarest old costume in America could not have tempted me to stand in those old boots!

The greeting over, the two pair moved off together, and I followed after them, having now a double interest. A pair of boots and a foot-stove, properties of mine, were at hazard. True, the boots are old and worn—one is a duplicate of the other, or, as a shoe-maker would say, they are not "rights and lefts." The toes are bluntly pointed and stiff, but I know of no other boots of the same make and date, and that is the reason they are dear to me.

They did not appear to be in the least dear to those little reckless feet in

the red, buckled shoes, and I made a mental note, as they tripped carelessly on, how the high heels prevented the small feet from touching aught but their toes to the earth; while the great, broad-soled, pointed-toed, square-heeled boots moved along humbly and awkwardly, slap! slap! beside their tiny companions.

The amount of emotion and thought that can be expressed by feet was a revelation to me. Such graphic expression of not only character, but incident and feeling as well, gave an additional interest to this strange adventure, and the interest grew to excitement when I saw a pair of Wellington boots come walking briskly up! I knew them—knew them well, for I had often tried to induce their owner to part with them. They belonged to a studio on Fourteenth Street.

As the new-comers came in sight, my boots looked mad. One would think it impossible for a pair of boots to show anger; but the manner in which my old Continentals set themselves squarely upon the ground, the bluntly-pointed toes turned out in a dignified yet defiant manner, was very expressive, and as unmistakable as a clinched fist or a corrugated brow.

A moment's hesitation, and the little red shoes ran ahead to meet the Wellingtons, and there they stood, side by side, the new-



MY WONDER WAS INCREASED BY MEETING A PAIR OF YELLOW-TOPPED BOOTS.



I HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED THESE OLD BOOTS WITH A FEELING AKIN TO AWE.

comers a great deal closer to the dainty silken toes than my poor boots had dared to come.

Intuitively I began to take sides with my property ; my sympathies were all with the Continentals, and I was aware of an undignified prejudice and jealousy toward an old pair of Wellington boots !

As the pedestrians started on their walk again, the feminine shoes guarded by the Continentals and Wellingtons on either side, I followed, fully determined to pursue the adventure to an end.

The foot-path that we traveled was strewn with dead leaves and edged with grass. No thought of where we were disturbed me, but I was impressed with the feeling that the

Wellington boots were trying to monopolize the attention of the red shoes, and either ignoring my Continentals entirely, or acknowledging their presence only by slighting or flippant remarks ; and my surmises were in a measure confirmed by the occasional grinding twist of a Continental heel into the frozen sod.

Presently we turned into a well-traveled road, where there seemed to be many feet, all walking in the same direction ; their destination proved to be a building, which we entered after ascending some wooden steps. A musty odor, peculiar to hymn-books and wood-work which receive an airing only once a week, proclaimed the building to be a church.

If it was cold inside the edifice, I was not reminded of it until the little, red-mittened hand placed the old foot-stove near by, and the same fascinating, red-clothed feet hopped upon it.

Close upon one side were my old Continental boots, and upon the other side the Wellingtons.

It was with ill-concealed impatience that I watched the egotistical wrinkles assumed by the impertinent up-town studio boots, and I felt my blood tingle with anger when they rested their varnished and polished toes against my old foot-stove, upon the top of which the little red shoes were perched.

For a time all three pairs of foot-gear maintained a deportment sufficiently discreet for church manners, but the way the Continentals finally kicked over a wooden footstool



IT WAS PROBABLY A PERCEPTION OF THIS THAT MADE THE BOOTS SO SELF-CONSCIOUS.

satisfied me that they at least were not in a receptive mood for the sermon.

Although conscious in a general way of my surroundings, my senses of hearing and of sight were focused upon the three pairs of feet, and what did not immediately affect them made no impression upon me.

I suppose the benediction was said, but I heard neither sermon, hymn, nor benediction, and only judged the services had ended, by the movement of the feet.

When the dainty, high-heeled shoes had descended from their perch upon the foot-warmer, two hands reached down simultaneously as if to take the stove. One was broad, muscular, and sun-burned; the other was gloved, but showed an aristocratic narrowness and length of fingers; and, notwithstanding the rich lace frill which fell partly over it from the wrist, there was nothing weak or effeminate in its appearance.

While I could not help admiring the refinement and genteel proportions of the gloved hand, I disliked it all the more for its good points. There was a momentary struggle between those two hands for the possession of my foot-stove, but it was soon evident that the brown fingers had been too quick for their rivals, and the latter retired, only to immediately reappear with a small visiting-card between the index and the second fingers.

The brown hand, as if in haste to carry the pretty foot-stove out into the aisle, hit its aristocratic comrade, and the card fell to the floor. Then the Continental boots stepped on it with a peculiar angry tread, and it seemed to me that, whatever the sermon had been about, it had not put much religion into any of those boots. For the dainty little red shoes had an air of coquettish pride at the sparks of jealous rivalry that were glancing from the boots on either side. (If you could have seen them, as I did, you would surely have said they were as expressive as countenances.) And the boots were bristling with a desire to trample on each other. In fact, only the presence of the delicate feet between them preserved peace.

Yet, as they passed out in the crowd of worshipers, they were the most interesting group of the entire throng. There were the shambling boots of aged men, aided by their stout canes, the easy gaiters of silk-clad dames, and many tiny feet of boys and girls moving in suppressed vivacity. There were reverent footsteps, as eloquent of piety as any upturned eyes, and the hasty paces toward the fresher atmosphere without, that spoke of tediousness in the service.

As my double trio moved in churchly procession out into the crisp air, I noticed that a number of prim masculine boots, strangers to me, halted in admiration, and several mo-



THE FEMININE SHOES, GUARDED BY THE CONTINENTALS AND WELLINGTONS ON EITHER SIDE.



TWO HANDS REACHED DOWN SIMULTANEOUSLY AS IF
TO TAKE THE STOVE.

tions indicated the exchange of courtesies. It was evident that the pink shoes with buckles belonged to the belle of the town; and that made me all the more curious as to the outcome.

Once again we were walking over the frozen ground of the country road, retracing our steps, and we had proceeded quite a distance when my strange guides stopped for a moment and then separated. The red shoes tripped lightly away until they passed the base of two large stone posts, but walked more slowly as they continued up a well-kept path.

To my surprise the boots did not offer to follow, but both pairs strode briskly together off in an opposite direction.

Here was a dilemma I had not anticipated. I was morally certain the red shoes had carried off my foot-stove; but, when I thought of my Continentals disappearing in company with those Wellingtons, I decided to follow the boots, consoling myself with the thought that the stove was probably safe, and that in the ordinary and natural course of events the boots would be sure to find the silken shoes again, and I my foot-warmer.

We left the road and walked Indian file

through underbrush and briars to what appeared to be a clearing in the woods. I was glad to be out of the brambles, for, knowing the fragile condition of my old boots, I greatly feared there would be nothing left of the top leather, and so interested was I in looking them over to count the damage that I at first failed to notice their odd pose. With toes pointing at right angles from each other, the boots stood planted wide apart, giving them a peculiar and I thought a somewhat dangerous look, if such a term may be used, when my attention was attracted by a clink and ring of metal, and, raising my eyes, I saw two gleaming steel blades—two long bright swords fencing in mid-air, lunging and parrying away in fine style.

My heart fairly stood still with excitement. I dreaded lest some lunge or stab might bring a pale, intense face within the circle of my vision.

It was skillful and brave work. That broad brown hand was as firm as iron, yet as supple in the wrist as a steel spring; and its long, thin, white, lace-edged antagonist was as quick and vicious as a cat's paw.

For an instant, the only movement of the crossed swords was a nervous tremor, then like a flash came a quick stroke and twist—up went one sword with a ringing sound glinting into the air.

"Bravo!" I was about to cry, when I was hushed by the appearance of that same soft, feminine, lace-mittened hand, much whiter now than before. It grasped the victorious blade, and closed the pretty fingers tightly over the wicked shining steel, while its trembling mate rested upon the big, broad, brown hand that still held the sword on guard. There was a moment's pause, then the sword dropped, and two brown, sinewy hands grasped the little mittened fingers in



ONLY TO IMMEDIATELY REAPPEAR WITH A SMALL
VISITING-CARD,

a rapturous, uncontrollable sort of a way, which not only plainly said that they cared not to press their vantage with the sword, but that they would brave anything for the sake of holding those little lace-mittened fingers.

To make sure to whom the brown hands belonged, I cast down my eyes and saw, as I felt I would, my old Continental boots. They were now no longer awkward, but with a sturdy, manly, happy stride, they walked alongside the red-silk-en, high-heeled, buckled shoes; and while these looked just as pretty, just as dainty, and just as piquant as ever, they had not now any suggestion of coquetry about them.

As they moved off, I followed, until we came suddenly upon my old foot-stove, where it had been hastily dropped by the side of the path. While I looked at it, the boots and shoes passed on. I noticed that the stove door was open, and all looked dark within.



IT GRASPED THE VICTORIOUS BLADE AND CLOSED THE PRETTY FINGERS TIGHTLY OVER THE WICKED SHINING STEEL.

The haze around the old foot-warmer gradually melted away, and I saw reflections of the lights from the streets dancing upon the walls of my studio, and in the dusky shadow I could trace what appeared to be my old Continental boots hanging alongside the buckskin trousers. I jumped from my seat, lighted a match, and examined the old foot-stove. The cinders were still in the metal cup. I moistened my finger with my tongue, touched the cinders, but they were *cold*!



TWO BROWN, SINEWY HANDS GRASPED THE LITTLE MITTINED FINGERS.



Algernon de Witt Caramel was a highly accomplished young gentleman. He conversed fluently in all the modern languages, and had mastered Greek, Latin, and Hebrew with the utmost ease. His voice was an exquisite, pure tenor, and his paintings far excelled those of any living artist. In appearance he was a veritable Adonis. He was, moreover, a graceful dancer, a fearless swimmer, a daring equestrian, a brilliant conversationalist, and was acknowledged to be, by all odds, the best-dressed man in town.

These various and attractive attributes had placed him in a very prominent and enviable position, but he was yet to win another title, one that was to make him world famous; in fact, the greatest celebrity of his age. Who lives who has not heard of Algernon De Witt Caramel, the Champion Short-Stop of America?

With these few brief remarks, we commence our very authentic history.

It was a glorious day in early June. The Polo grounds were thronged with an eager and clamorous crowd awaiting the great sporting event of the year, namely, the famous match between the wondrous "Brobdignagians" of the great metropolis, and the renowned "Bridegrooms" of the City of Churches. The grand stand was filled to suffocation with representatives of beauty and fashion, prominent among them being Miss Violet Veronica Van Sittart, our hero's peerlessly beautiful fiancée.

Each member of the rival teams received a lusty welcome as he stepped forth upon the turf, but when Caramel appeared the enthusiasm knew no bounds. Handkerchiefs waved, hats were thrown up madly, strong men wept and weak women fainted. Violet Veronica grew alternately lily-white and rosy-red while her gallant young lover cast an ardent glance of affection towards her, bowing again and again to the excited multitude.

In all the vast crowd assembled there was but one heart that beat unresponsive to the rest. This particular heart was lodged somewhere in the neighborhood of the fifth rib appertaining to the anatomy of Mr. Rudolf Von Hostetter, and was, in fact, full and overflowing with rage, hatred, and malice. Rudolf detested Algernon cordially. He had, himself, been an aspirant for the hand of Violet Veronica, and had not been without some faint signs of encouragement until the advent of the Short-Stop; then he was dropped—gently and kindly, but most decidedly dropped. This was gall and wormwood to Mr. Rudolf Von Hos-



THE CHAMPION SHORT-STOP.



tetter of Brooklyn. He was a tall, handsome man, of a mephistophelian cast of countenance. Being both bold and bad, you can easily recognize him as the Heavy Villain of my story. As he listened to the wild shouts of welcome accorded his rival, a grim smile distended his saturnine features, as he hugged to his breast—what? Something that in appearance was simplicity itself, being nothing more nor less than an ordinary baseball. And yet—, let there be no deception; this same base-ball was enchanted! He had paid five dollars for it to a magician who lived in Green Street, and its marvelous properties evoked the Satanic delight which beamed in his handsome, wicked face.

"Aye," muttered he, between his clenched teeth, "applaud your spoiled darling, ye fools! And you, false Violet Veronica, smile on your pretty boy. Little reck ye how soon Caramel and Brobguag will be forgotten, and the glad cry will be 'Hostetter and the Bridegrooms!'"

It is not my intention to inflict on you a full and particular account of this most celebrated game, for, as you know, every news paper in the country has done so already far more clearly and scientifically than I could ever hope to; and yet, in the interest of my story, I must remind you

of certain events that occurred towards the close of the match. When the last half of the ninth innings was called, the score stood as follows:

Brobdignagians—2

Bridegrooms—1

It was now the turn of the Bridegrooms to take the bat in a bold endeavor to win, or at least, to tie the game. Before commencing work, the players, as is their boyish fashion, tossed the ball idly from one to the other, and suddenly it rolled, as if impelled by some power unseen, to Hostetter's feet, who deftly exchanged it, unobserved, for the one he had purchased from the weird sorcerer. "And now the game indeed is ours!" muttered he; and threw the ball lightly to the Pitcher, the famous Timotheus of the "Brobs."

The first to take the bat was that prime favorite among the "Grooms," the handsome O'Duffer. He went to his place with a firm step and a proud heart, determined to do or die; however, nimble Timotheus soon settled his fond hopes with a mighty fling that sent the "little joker" flying true over the home plate. Alas for O'Duffer! it was "one, two, three, and out." Next from the Bridegroom ranks came sturdy little Macarty, with a cast-iron smile that boded no good to his opponent. He, however, was speedily "retired" by the Umpire on account of interfering with the catcher. Poor Mac "retired in soft confusion," like the heroine of a dime novel. Duck Owing, the catcher, could not suppress a grin; for



HOSTETTER.



"PLUCKY YOUNG TIMOTHEUS."

with two men out, and no runs added to the score, he could almost see that shy bird, Victory, perching upon the banner of the "Brobs." Now, at last, came Hostetter's opportunity, who had witnessed, with fine unconcern, the discomfiture of his associates. Bat in hand the champion of the Lilliputians stepped to the home plate, and received a warm recognition from both friends and foes, for he certainly was a very handsome fellow, as well as a famous bat's-man, and all the hopes of his party lay in the strength of his stalwart arms and in the forlorn chance of a home-run. Plucky young Timotheus never exerted himself more than at this moment; he threw the ball viciously at Hostetter, who received it carelessly, and missed.

"One strike!" cried the Umpire.

(Tim had delivered one of his famous "in-curves.") Again Timotheus sent the little globe flying on its way, but this time surely his hand had lost its cunning, for "One ball!" cried the Umpire. Another attempt, and still another, both in vain, among groans from the "Brobs," and cheers from the "Grooms." "Two balls!" "Three balls!" in quick succession shouted the Umpire, but there was no response, for the crowd had actually become hushed in a fearful tension of interest and excitement.

Timotheus, goaded to desperation, made a magnificent effort, and the happy result was that "Two strikes!" was called, but unfortunately was followed by four balls!" The eventful moment had

arrived: expectation was on tiptoe; the people were benumbed—breathless: Violet Veronica gasped out a little prayer for her Algernon and his party. And then Timotheus, for the last time, lifted the Enchanted Ball, and with one mighty effort sent it flying, to be received broadly on Hostetter's bat, and thence whirled, on the rebound, in the direction of Left Field.

Here our gallant, ever-watchful Short-Stop, rushed forward to intercept it, but the magic toy simply grazed his fingers in its flight. At the moment of contact an electric current seemed to pass through his frame. He turned swiftly and darted after the flying ball. In his ears rang a myriad voices crying, "Run Hostetter, run!" "A three-bagger!"—"Bridegrooms for ever!" but still, impelled by supernatural force, on rolled the magic base-ball, hotly pursued by Caramel, who fairly gnashed his teeth with rage and chagrin, when he saw it reach the high white-washed fence which encloses the Polo Grounds, and clear it with a leap and now occurred something wonderful. Caramel,—seeing the course the ball had taken, gave himself and the game up for lost, but to his intense astonishment he found himself entirely independent of his own volition, bounding after, and actually on the other side of



"THE HANDSOME O'DUFFER."



"STURDY LITTLE MACARTY."

the fence! On sped the ball, and on sped Algernon; John Gilpin was nowhere in the record. Fancy the dismay of the good folks on the Boulevard as they witnessed the astonishing spectacle! horses ran away, women screamed, bicycles dashed into baby-carriages, and their riders into the arms of pretty nurse-maids. The only other person who profited by the excitement was an itinerant photographer, who made an instantaneous sketch of Caramel clearing a horse-car, and realized quite a handsome profit by the sale thereof. Nothing could check the velocity of the ball, nor the flight of the Short-Stop. When such trifling impediments as carriages, wagons, or equestrians blocked the way, both pursuer and pursued vaulted lightly into the air, and in a moment the obstruction was left a mile behind. Now they were tearing on through Central Park at the rate of eighty miles an hour. Faster and faster! another moment found them whirling down Fifth Avenue in the direction of the Battery. On and on, and now, oh horror! the blue

waters of the bay were dancing before his distended eyes. "Does the infernal thing propose to drown me?" he screamed in anguish, but marvelous to relate! in another moment the enchanted ball was skimming the white crest of the waves in an easterly direction. As soon as our bewildered hero found that the Atlantic was but as a soft, cool, silken carpet beneath his feet he began to gain heart,—in fact, he presently experienced a delightful feeling of exhilaration, and no longer felt the slightest anxiety in regard to the position in which he found himself.

They were now proceeding at almost lightning speed, when a tiny black speck on the horizon, with a trail of smoke behind it, betokened a mighty ocean steamer, and in less than five seconds Caramel had overtaken her. It proved to be one of the flyers of the White Star line. The kindly and popular doctor was indulging in a matutinal cocktail with his friend, Mr. S. of New York; both were gazing dreamily over the broad bosom of the ocean, when, swift in his flight as a falling star, our hero darted by. The doctor turned pale, and gazed with a hollow eye upon his friend, who was trembling visibly. The same idea had occurred simultaneously to both these boon companions.

"Sidonius!" cried Dr. K., in sepulchral tones; "this settles it! I'll swear off!" "And I am with you, my boy" echoed his friend, although tears were in his manly voice.

And ever faster and faster flew the ball, and ever faster and faster flew the Short-Stop. And now the sun was dipping his rosy head beneath the vast Atlantic.





"NOTHING WOULD CHECK THE FLIGHT OF THE SHORT-STOP."

Caramel's heart swelled proudly as he realized that he had beaten the record. He had crossed the ocean in less than two hours!

Before him stretched a long line of gray cliffs, with a narrow belt of yellow sand beneath, and presently he found himself bounding over the sand-hills across long stretches of barren waste land. Soon the twinkling lights of a lonely village were seen, for evening was drawing in. The magic base-ball spun through the one long, straggling street, with Algernon behind it, and the terrified peasants dropped on their knees and crossed themselves as the strange apparition passed them by. Out again into the open country, and across a pretty river flowing peacefully between its softly wooded banks. More villages, rivers, meadows, hills, and now they approached a noble forest. Over the vast pine-tree tops whirled the ball, while the moon broke forth in solemn splendor, and our hero gazed in rapt wonder on the glorious scene beneath. A sea! a shimmering sea of waving branches bathed in the silver beams of the argent Queen of Night! They have reached the limits of the mighty forest at last, and a broad, white road lies before them. It is on an upward incline, and appears to have been hewn out of the solid rock. Nothing daunted, on and up they go, until a massive, magnificent building rises before them—a

mediæval castle perched upon the crest of a gigantic cliff, frowning down upon a mighty river. Evidently some festival is being held within its ancient walls, for from every casement pours forth light and music—the sounds of revelry and rippling laughter.

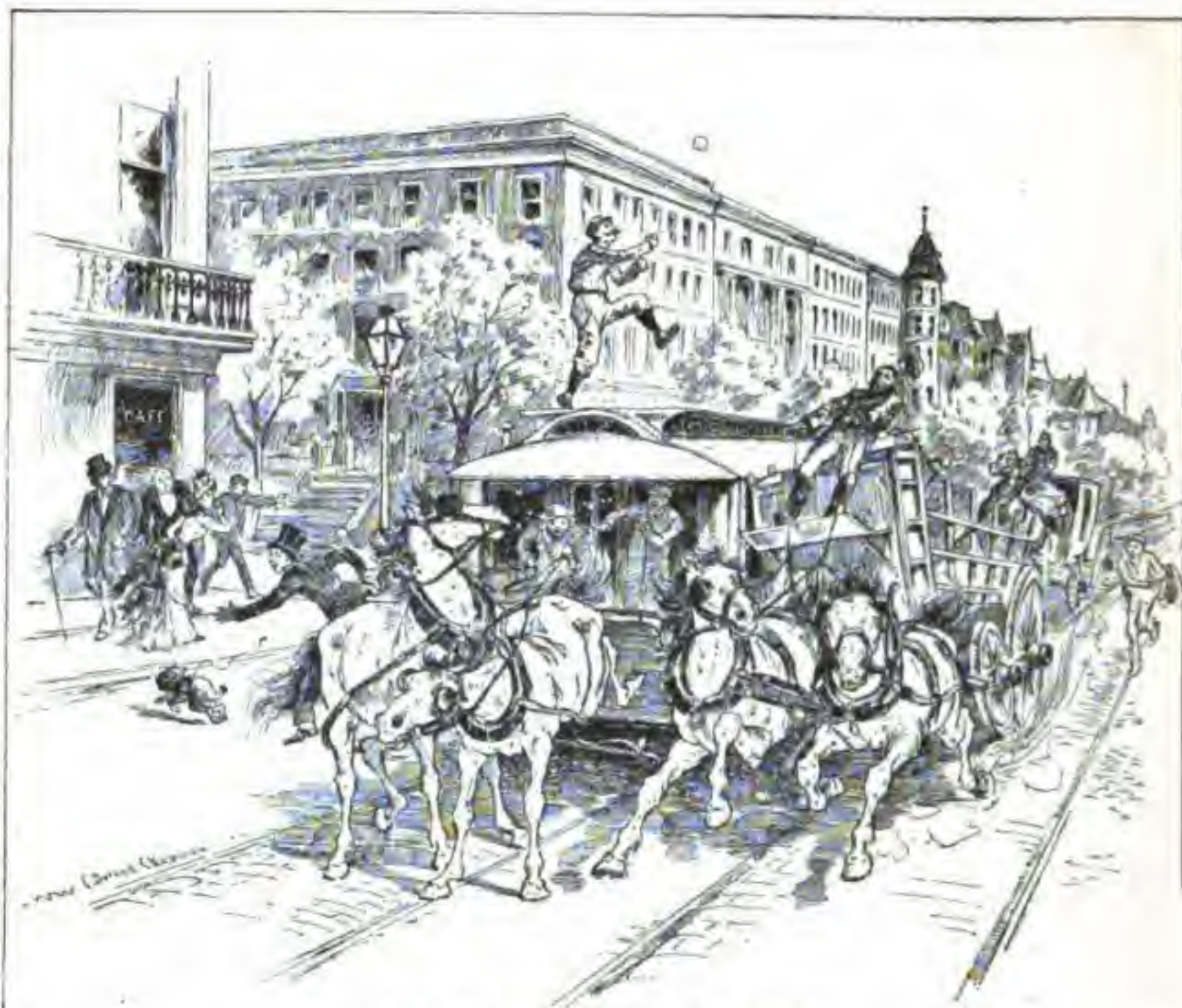
One final, energetic spin, and the magic base-ball dashes itself against the brazen portals of the castle, which respond with a mighty clang. Then, spent, exhausted, it rebounds, and like a submissive hound, halts at our hero's feet!

PART II.

You may suppose that Mr. Caramel was utterly exhausted after his marvelous trip across the Atlantic. Not a bit of it! He never felt better or brighter in his life, nor did his manly beauty ever shine forth with greater lustre than when, after placing the enchanted base-ball very carefully in his hip pocket, he awaited a response to its summons.

Slowly and silently the massive portals swung open, discovering within a most wondrous picture. Imagine a vast hall thronged with gallant knights and lovely ladies, some exchanging courtly badinage, others treading a sprightly measure, to the soft lilting of lute, mandolin and viol. Graceful young pages were in attendance, proffering refreshments in the shape of the rarest fruits, the most exquis-





HORSES RAN AWAY AND WOMEN SCREAMED.

ite wines, while the gentle moon gazed mildly in between the golden arches of the hall, and richest perfumes filled the intoxicating air, mingled with the dewy breath of a thousand roses, and the soft warble of crystal fountains from the garden without.

"This must surely be some court masquerade," thought our hero. "These costumes apparently are those of the fifteenth century." The dance was now at an end, and he perceived on his right a raised dais, where beneath a gorgeous canopy was seated a venerable gentleman of fatherly and benign aspect. His figure was portly rather than majestic; his eyes were blue, and twinkling with good humor; his gray locks fell in old-fashioned ringlets on his shoulders. By his side, gracefully seated on a low couch, reclined the loveliest creature in the world.

She was apparently about eighteen years of age. Her figure was tall and elegant, and her glorious golden tresses

fell in two heavy braids almost to her feet. Her flowing robe was of Nile-green brocade, richly embroidered with silver. She wore long angel sleeves, and her swanlike throat was encircled with many rows of priceless pearls and diamonds. To his infinite surprise, however, Caramel discovered that this divine creature wore spectacles, or rather *goggles*, over her wonderful blue eyes. Certainly these goggles were framed in golden filigree so fine and delicate that they were almost imperceptible, but they were there nevertheless, to mar, to some extent, her otherwise unrivaled loveliness. On looking around Caramel was surprised to see that the old lord (evidently her father) also wore golden goggles, and so, indeed, did every person present, lords, ladies, and all, down to the little foot pages themselves. Our hero now advanced with simple, manly grace, and bowed before his venerable host, who gazed at him with surprise, but no displeasure.

"Who art thou, and what seekest



THE BALL WAS SKIMMING THE CREST OF THE WAVES.

thou?" demanded the old gentleman.

"I am an American," returned Algernon. "My name is Caramel, and I am the champion Short-Stop of the world."

A scene of excitement ensued. All present pushed forward to obtain a nearer view of the distinguished player, while the old nobleman tottered down the steps of the throne and warmly grasped Algernon's hands in his.

"Welcome, thrice welcome!" cried he. "We had deemed thee but some poor monarch, some petty, puny princeling; age must be our excuse, and the infirmities of age. Rise, Aldegonda, and make thy obeisance to the greatest man of the day!" The beautiful young lady rose dutifully, and then dropped a most graceful courtesy, at the same time turning her lustrous orbs,—(goggles and all) upon our hero, who, thereupon, straightway fell head over heels in love with the fair princess; home, country, Violet Veronica, all! all, alas, were forgotten.

Nothing could exceed the cordiality of the old Prince Otto Von Blitzenburg. I shall not weary you with a description of the doings of the next three months. Fête followed fête in dazzling succession; hunting parties, sailing on the river by moonlight; concerts, banquets, balls; until Caramel began to think the coffers of Prince Otto must be inexhaustible. Very shortly after their first introduction Algernon and Aldegonda had become engaged, with the entire approval of

the lady's father, who appeared to think his "one fair daughter" extremely fortunate in securing so eligible a *parti* as our handsome Short-Stop, although, he often remarked to Caramel, "Kings and Emperors had sighed for her in vain."

Caramel would now have been perfectly happy but that no amount of entreaty could induce Aldegonda to remove her golden goggles, while she was equally determined to obtain possession of the magic base-ball. The lovely princess pouted; scolded; coaxed; wept. The last manœuvre settled it, for Algernon promised her that he would present her with his treasure as soon as they were pronounced man and wife. Aldegonda immediately dried her tears, and led him in triumph to the old prince, her father, who embraced them both with effusion, informing them that the nuptials should take place at midnight on the following evening. That night, after bidding a fond farewell to his beautiful betrothed, Caramel sought his own apartments. As he approached them he beheld streams of dazzling light pouring through the half-opened door of his sitting-room, and upon entering, beheld a sight that made him reel with astonishment.

The casement was, as he had left it, flung wide open; and perched upon the sill, bathed in the full glory of the harvest moon, was the slight form of a beautiful girl, in the very dawn of woman-



hood. Her golden tresses, light as this-
tledown, floated around her; a bright star
glistened on her forehead, while her wings, tinted
with rainbow hues, waved lightly
to and fro, as you may have seen the
idle sails of a fair bark at anchor,
or the pinions of a weary butterfly
resting awhile in the warm, red
bosom of a rose. "Do not fear me,

Algernon!" cried the elf, in sweet, bell-like tones. "I am here to
save you from the evil spells of a vile band of enchanters, who
plan your eternal destruction. Know that I am the fairy Iolanthe,
I loved your mother well; indeed, you are my godson, boy!"

Caramel sank upon one knee and kissed the dainty little hand
extended to him.

"Did it ever occur to you," pursued the winsome fairy,
"that your unrivaled beauty and manifold accomplishments
prove you to be something more than mortal?"

The handsome Algernon acknowledged that he had fre-
quently been impressed with such an idea.

"Your impressions were well founded," nodded the fairy;
"but don't forget that you owe everything to me, your
godmother. It was I who, in the guise of a magician, sold the
enchanted base-ball to Hostetter. That traitor imagined it would
compass your ruin; well, we will hoist him with his own petard!"
and Iolanthe laughed merrily.

"Only tell me," pleaded Algernon, "that Aldegonda is not
one of this vile crew?"

"Aldegonda! the very worst of all. Stay, let me prove it.
While in her present form, she is, to a certain extent, subservient
to mortal conditions. Among others, she is a victim to som-
nambulism, and while taking her nocturnal rambles is apt to
appear without her golden goggles. Intercept her and gaze into

her eyes. Through the left you can look into her heart; through the right into
her soul."

"Both pure as Heaven itself, I swear!" said Algernon.

"Judge for yourself. One more word and I'm off," returned Iolanthe. "Be-
fore repeating the form to-morrow
night that will bind you forever to Al-
degonda, fling the magic base-ball into
Prince Otto's face, and you will see
what you will see! Algernon, my dear
boy, will you obey me?"

There was no resisting the sweet,
pleading voice, that yet had in it the
unmistakable accent of command.

Then Aldegonda appeared, clad in a
simple white robe—; her blue eyes dis-
tended, and *without her goggles!* Follow-
ing his godmother's advice Caramel
gazed into those staring orbs. In the
left he beheld distinctly the form
of a crouching tiger, rending a
lamb asunder with its cruel fangs;
in the right, the image of a foul
fiend with talons outstretched to grasp
him. Sick at heart, Algernon stole



"THE MAGIC BASE-BALL SPUN THROUGH ONE
LONG STRAGGLING STREET."



"RISE AND MAKE THY OBEISANCE TO THE GREATEST MAN OF THE DAY."

softly away, and strange to say from the moment he had gazed into Aldegonda's unveiled eyes, all the past came back to him, and once more the sweet maidenly image of Violet Veronica resumed its rightful place in the affections of her lover.

According to the imperial will and directions of Prince Otto Von Blitzenburg, the wedding was to take place at midnight in the great hall of the castle. Long ere that hour it was flooded with the same brilliant assemblage that had graced it on his arrival.

At length, "'Tis time!" cried Prince Otto. "Let the ceremony proceed!" At this moment from the great bell of the castle was heard the first stroke of midnight; as if impatient to fulfill its mission the magic base-ball turned in Caramel's pocket, giving him a forcible nudge. Before the third stroke had sounded Algernon drew it forth, and taking deliberate aim at the goggles, dashed it full in Prince Otto's face!

The glass was shattered immediately and at the same instant a terrific peal of thunder was heard; fierce flashes of lightning surrounded them; sulphureous

flames lapped the castle walls, which fell with a crash, and sank through the earth!

Algernon De Witt Caramel found himself standing on the bare bleak summit of a lofty mountain. He immediately recognized that he was on the haunted Brocken, with the Black Forest extending around him in every direction. All the fine lords and ladies had been transformed into wizards and witches: the musicians were wailing ghosts! the beautiful bridesmaids were fleshless skeletons, and the pretty little pages were uncanny imps and gibbering monkeys. As Aldegonda stretched out her withered arms towards him, he felt a sharp rap.

He recognized the signal, and when the ball set off in a westerly direction, off, too, flew Caramel, like a second Tam o' Shanter, with the whole hideous crew at his heels, shrieking and howling as they whirled through the murky air. However, although they made excellent time (especially those who were mounted on fiery, untamed, broomsticks), they were distanced from the start by our hero.

Soon uprose Sol, rosy and smiling, and up rose Caramel's brave young heart, for he knew he was leaving doubt, mysticism, and diablerie behind him. As if it guessed that it was homeward bound, the enchanted ball flew on a hundred times faster than before, and soon a long blue line is seen that tells them America lies before them!

A moment after they are spinning up the beautiful bay. On and on, along the avenue, the park, the boulevard, and now the magic ball cleared the high fence of the Polo Grounds with Caramel close behind it, then, with a sudden turn, leaps and nestles in his ready hand. He seizes *it*, and the situation—at a glance. All his marvelous adventures have taken place during the lapse of one minute.

Hostetter is rushing at lightning speed from base to base! First and second have been passed. "A tie! Home, home!" they cry. "Never!" mutters Caramel, as he beholds the hateful Hostetter passing the third base on the home stretch. And then from far left field he



THE FAIRY IOLANTHE.

sends the magic ball swifter than thought into the ready hands of gal-

lant Duck Owing. Amid the clamor of the multitude rings the clarion voice of the Umpire, "OUT!" The great game is won. Hostetter and the Bridegrooms are vanquished, and Caramel and the Brob-dignagians are champions of the world!

There is little more to add. Three weeks after the events recorded above our hero was united to his charming Violet Veronica. As Caramel's professional earnings represent a yearly income of several millions, the young couple are doing very nicely indeed.



THE HAUNTED BROCKEN.



I.

NO other art can vie with music after all. Poetry, painting and sculpture require attention and respond only to an effort, but music takes possession of you, reluctant though you be. Like a rising tide it surrounds you and pours its rhythmic waves into every nook and crevice of your soul. It is the only art too that can send thrills and shivers down one's back, and you must admit that this is a confession for a landscape painter to make, but I know whereof I speak.

It was at Les Baux last September that I learned the true nature of melody. I had visited the Exposition at Paris from a sense of duty. For two weeks I had been elbowed and crushed, persecuted by cabmen and defrauded by landlords. It was impossible to enjoy even the pictures in the midst of a noisy, gaping crowd. At last I fled from the turmoil and hubbub, and as I was determined to avoid mankind as much as possible I went at once to the south of France, where few tourists are to be found in summer or early autumn. For some days I stopped at Avignon, and spent my time very agreeably in sketching the parched scenery of the neighborhood. Then I pushed on to Tarascon, a town prouder now of its Tartarin than of the bones of St. Martha, which repose in one of its churches, and it was there that I painted a baobab tree in a green tub. Les Baux is only ten miles from Tarascon, and the glowing description of it in Murray induced me to make it my headquarters. I found it to be without exception the most peculiar village in Christendom. I drove out from Tarascon, taking my lug-

gage with me, and my first view of the place was not encouraging. I could see it from a great distance, the yellowish-white houses scarcely distinguishable from the limestone cliffs which form the tops of the arid range of hills known as the "Alpines." My carriage ascended by a winding road and at last entered the main street, when for the first time I was able to see that half of the houses were deserted and that some of them were mere caverns in the rock. The little hotel, which the guidebook calls "clean and respectable," was soon reached, and I alighted with some misgivings as to the possibility of securing a comfortable room.

When I had taken my déjeuner I started out for a walk, as I always do on my first arrival at a town. I wandered through the narrow, crooked streets, now almost depopulated, and examined the primitive cave dwellings of the Middle Ages and the handsome marble façades of the Renaissance, wondering why the 4000 inhabitants of two centuries ago should have dwindled down to about 300. At the crest of the hill rose the ruined castle of the robber counts, and from it I had a magnificent view of the plain below. The air was most invigorating and I did not feel in the least tired, so I resolved to climb down from the ridge and explore for myself the country lying about its base under the village.

After making my way downwards for half an hour or more, and just before reaching the level ground, I sat down to rest at the mouth of an old marble quarry no longer in use, which afforded a refreshing shade from the afternoon sun. I had not been seated many minutes before there struck my ears a strain of marvellous

music. At first I scarcely knew what it was. I felt a delicious, intoxicating, inspiring sensation, that was all, and for some time I was so completely carried away that I did not attempt to define the nature and cause of my feelings. I have no idea how long I listened, but at last silence ensued, and I awoke as from an enchantment. I sat for a time perplexed, trying to recall my experience. It was evidently a voice, but such a voice! That of a woman, too, unless indeed it proceeded from some supernatural being. It was song, or something transcending song, and unlike anything I had ever imagined. When I had sufficiently recovered my senses I arose and walked in the direction from which the sound had seemed to come. Turning a sharp corner of the rock I saw a small two-story cottage close to the foot of the hill, and not more than 100 yards from where I had been resting. There was no enclosure about the house, and a single dusty olive tree shaded the porch. I went at once to the door and knocked, but no one answered. I knocked again, and even peered in at the windows, but it was of no use. The sinking sun admonished me to set out on my way back to the inn, and I unwillingly gave up the quest for the time. I crossed the fields to the nearest highway, which was at least half a mile distant, and ascended by the road again to the village, passing no one except an elderly, white-haired man dressed in black and carrying a basket, who had the air of a Protestant pastor, and saluted me with grave politeness.

II.

It was dark when I reached the hotel, and the table d'hôte, at which I was the only guest, was just ready. I found my host in the dining room superintending the final arrangements, and asked him at once who it was whom I had heard singing in the valley.

"Oh, that!" said he, "that is the daughter of the professor."

"But who is the professor?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I know nothing about him. He has only lived there two months. The house belongs to a merchant at Arles, and has been empty for a year, but one day we found it occupied. The professor had driven out there with

his daughter the night before from Arles, and they have lived there alone ever since."

"What does she look like?" I asked. "She must be very handsome."

"We have never seen her. The professor keeps her in the house. He comes here every day and buys some meat and bread and vegetables, but he never brings her."

"But what reason does he give for hiding her from everyone?"

"Oh, we cannot ask him. He is a strange man, and gets angry when we speak to him of his daughter."

"Do you mean to say," I cried indignantly, "that you can hear such singing as that without trying to see her?"

"Eh bien, what do you wish?" he replied, shrugging his shoulders. "We must live. He comes here and buys from us, and we must not vex him. We cannot live on music."

The sordid creature did not even know the professor's name, nor his former home, but in his description of him I recognized the old man whom I had met on the road. I determined to make his acquaintance on the morrow and seek an introduction to his daughter. I slept but little that night. The song I had heard was ever hovering near, but just beyond the reach of my memory. I could not recall it, but its effect was still upon me and I longed to enjoy it again. With this object in view I was about to start off after breakfast when it occurred to me that it would be best to meet the professor in the village, for he might resent intrusion at his house. I passed most of the day in pacing nervously up and down before the hotel, and I am sure that never before to traveller did the ruins of Les Baux appear more desolate nor its inhabitants more degenerate.

It was late in the afternoon that I saw the old gentleman whom I had met the day before, toiling up the road with his basket and a white umbrella.

"There he is," said mine host.

In appearance the professor was a very ordinary and unmusical mortal, but I felt very ill at ease at his approach, regarding him somewhat as the mythical sire of some new divinity. He ascended the steps of the inn slowly, wiping his heated brow with a red handkerchief. He bowed

to me and gave his basket to the landlord, who took it into the kitchen to replenish, while its owner sat down on a bench opposite me on the porch, and I seized the opportunity to study him closely. He was a short, stout man, with an expansive, ruddy, shaven face and a pair of blue glasses, and his black broadcloth suit was

parently did not hear, and after mature consideration I concluded that it was not worth repeating. I was preparing a series of questions on the weather, when the utter hopelessness of gaining his attention by general conversation broke upon me, and I resolved to jump in medias res.

"Professor," I shouted. He awoke with a start and his glasses fell into his lap. "Professor, I had the good fortune to hear Mademoiselle your daughter sing yesterday. May I ask of you if it is possible for me to hear her again; that is to say, to meet her and pay my respects to you both at your house?"

His mouth opened and formed a very small O, a vacant stare of amazement came



well worn. I kept silent for some minutes hoping that he would speak first, but as he did not I was forced to begin, of course, in French.

"I have the honor to address Professor—r—, I believe," I said, slurring over the place where his name should have been.

"Perfectly," he answered.

I did not know exactly what to say next, and we sat still again for a while. I am not sure, but I think his eyes were shut behind his spectacles.

"What do you think of the country here?" I ventured. This remark he ap-

I SAW A SMALL COTTAGE AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL.

parently did not hear, and his blue spectacles slid down his trousers to the floor.

"Did I understand you to say that you wished to see my—daughter?" he stammered out at last.

I nodded assent.

"Monsieur," said he, "this is a piece of presumption which I can hardly comprehend. My daughter comes here to complete her musical education under my

care without interruption. We have expressly sought solitude. We desire to work, to study, to make progress alone. And you, a stranger, propose to yourself to derange us? This is indeed unworthy conduct."

In vain I pleaded. I depicted myself as a wanderer in search of the beautiful. He did not care. I represented that his daughter needed recreation and society. He actually laughed at me. I am afraid that I might have retaliated forcibly if the conversation had lasted much longer, but fortunately his basket was brought to him and he took his departure before I had lost my self-control.

III.

I was grievously disappointed and I did not know precisely what course to pursue. I resolved finally after much thought to make my way into the professor's good graces, if possible, and in the meantime to listen to his daughter every day from my hiding place in the old quarry. Early on the morrow I set out and took up my former position near the cottage. I arrived there at about eight o'clock and waited impatiently for the music. An hour passed; ten o'clock was approaching, but still I heard nothing. Could it be that the professor had sent his daughter away to escape me? But no; suddenly and without warning the full stream of song burst forth on the morning air. It thrilled me like an electric spell and held me in a kind of ecstasy. I felt its power more indeed than I had before. After an hour had passed the music came to an end, but still I could not persuade myself to leave the spot, and I was rewarded by another hour of bliss in the afternoon, after which I saw the professor sally forth on his daily walk to Les Baux. I had a strong impulse to break into his house and carry off his daughter, who must surely have been an unwilling prisoner, but I was sensible enough to see that there would be great risk in such a proceeding. She might refuse to come, and all hope of reaching her through her father would have vanished. I must make him my friend, I thought, and with the intention of gaining the town before him, I made my way across country. When he arrived at the inn I was quietly sitting before the door.

The fortnight that followed was one of

intense happiness to me. I spent the day regularly at the quarry and carried my lunch with me. I also took my canvas and easel, at first to disarm the suspicion of the gossips at Les Baux, for I had no idea of painting, and I merely gave myself up unreservedly to my passion. I am aware that this account of my feelings sounds exaggerated and improbable and a twelvemonth ago I should not have been able to appreciate it myself, but my readers must take it on faith that the voice was little short of miraculous. One day as I was recovering from the delirium of the morning hour a sudden vision of the face of the daughter of the professor came into my mind and seemed to float before my eyes. Before it vanished I had grasped my brush and begun to paint under the inspiration. Thereafter my pleasure was double, alternating between the passive delight of receiving ever fresh revelations of musical beauty, and the invigorating effort to arrest in color, however faintly, the echo of what I had heard. My idol thus became a real person to me, and I was sure that I knew her form and expression. I felt then the necessity of giving her a name. "The daughter of the professor" would not do; it was altogether too suggestive of Ollendorff. I thought of "Cecilia," but there was nothing of the Christian saint in the voice I had heard. At last I chose "Sirena," not that it suited exactly, but there was a kind of self-sufficient energy in her song that reminded me of the ancient tempters of Ulysses.

Every afternoon I hastened to the hotel in time to meet the professor and court his intimacy. I carefully avoided all reference to Sirena and we became very good friends, although he never confided to me either his name or his antecedents. I passed the evenings dreamily smoking in front of the inn door, while the neighbors gathered in groups in the street, bringing their chairs with them and chatting all at once in Provençal. I did not understand a word of their patois, but I have always believed that they were usually amusing themselves at the expense of my personal appearance and deriding me as a lunatic for spending more than six hours at Les Baux. I have consequently carried away a strong prejudice against the townsfolk.

Night after night I lay awake trying to

devise some method of approaching the professor on the subject nearest my heart, and finally it occurred to me that my picture might form a sort of introduction. One afternoon as he was about to leave the hotel on his homeward walk I called him back and asked him to come into my bedroom as I wished to show him something. He followed me through the dining room and went in at my door, which I held open for him.

"Do you know who that is?" I asked

I was satisfied with my success in securing his attention. Now, thought I, is the time to press my claims.

"Professor," said I, "may I not walk home with you and show it to her?"

With an innocuous French oath he turned on his heel.

"Mon cher!" he cried from the door, shaking his puffy fist at me—he was so used to calling me "mon cher" that he did not remark the absurdity of it—"Mon cher, this is a little too much. Let me



"PROFESSOR, THAT IS YOUR DAUGHTER."

as I boldly held up the portrait before him. It was far from being finished, but there was enough there to shadow forth my conception. He looked puzzled and said nothing.

"Professor," I added, "that is your daughter. I have made her likeness although I have never seen her."

He frowned for a moment and then half smiled.

"Yes, yes, yes!" said he. "I understand, mon cher. That is not bad either, but it cannot sing. Bah! You cannot paint her voice; but it is well done—well done!"

never see you again." And in a moment he was gone and on his way down the hill.

IV.

I had indeed made matters worse and there was clearly but one thing left for me to do. I must see Sirena at all hazards, and the only way to accomplish this was to enter the house during her father's absence. The next day I was at the quarry as usual and in the afternoon, as soon as the professor took the road to Les Baux, I came out of my hiding place and hurried to the porch. I tried the door

and it proved to be locked as I had expected. There was a window on each side and I turned to the one on the left. It opened easily with a push and when I had climbed through it I found myself in a large, poorly furnished sitting room, into which the front door also gave access. There was another door opposite and by it I went into the kitchen. These were the only rooms on that floor. On one side of the kitchen to my left was a flight of stairs leading to the upper story, and I lost no time in ascending them. This floor was divided into four rooms of equal size, communicating with each other. In one corner was the room into which the stairway conducted me, a kind of hall in which there was nothing but the ordinary rubbish of an attic. Next to it, and also over the kitchen, was a room which was absolutely empty. Beyond this again to the right, in the corner opposite to the stairs, was a bedroom evidently occupied by the professor, for his clothes were lying about it. Only one quarter of the surface of this story now remained unexplored, and with some trepidation I tried the door of the fourth room; but it was fastened. This then was Sirena's room. My heart beat rapidly as I thought that only a thin partition separated me from her. I tapped gently but there was no answer. I struck the panel harder and harder again and again. Finally I called out and implored her to admit me, but all was silent. Then I retraced my steps through the other rooms, to the door which connected her room with the stairway, but it too was bolted. I sat down on a bench in despair, utterly at a loss what to do, when by chance the key in the door through which I had passed caught my eye and at once I pulled it out and put it into the other lock. It fit perfectly and the door yielded. To my astonishment I saw what seemed to be a workroom. It contained a deal work table and one wooden chair. On the table was a small case of tools which looked like a dentist's instruments, some strips of tinfoil and a very large oaken box. On the other side was a single window wide open, and directly over the window by which I had come into the house. It commanded a view of the rock which concealed my quarry, into which I could have thrown a stone. Everything in the room was in

plain sight and unquestionably Sirena was not there. I examined the window to see if she might have jumped out, but it was impossible. No man would have dared to attempt it. In turning from the window my eyes fell again on the oaken box and I noticed a large opening in the side toward me, with the end of a trumpet protruding from it. I quickly raised the lid of the box and the truth at once flashed upon me. I had seen the phonograph at the Exposition and here was a similar instrument, only instead of the appliances for the ears the trumpet opening had been substituted. I examined it hurriedly, bellows, clockwork and all, and then closed the box and retreated through the house, looking under and behind the furniture and even feeling the walls to make sure that no one was concealed there, but carefully leaving everything as I found it. I leaped out of the window by which I had entered and went back to my lair, scarcely knowing what my discovery signified. For a long time I thought the matter over and came at length to the conclusion that the professor was engaged in some secret experiments for perfecting the phonograph so that it might produce sounds with their original or a greater volume; but this did not interest me. The fact of importance was that he had obtained the impressions of some marvellous voice, whether his daughter's or someone's else. And now I must find the woman, as my happiness in life depended on it. On my way home I revolved the question in my mind and the only plan I could devise was to go back to the cottage the following day and search for letters, papers, books, in short, anything which might indicate where the professor had previously lived. If that failed I might apply to him again, but that was almost hopeless.

V.

On the ensuing afternoon I visited the house again and systematically studied its contents, but I did not find a single clew. There were a few books on electricity, but they were published at Paris and there was no name on the fly leaves. While I was searching for some mark in the oaken box I accidentally touched a cog wheel and two or three exquisite notes came forth. I could not resist the temptation to wind up the



I QUICKLY RAISED THE LID OF THE BOX.

works, and before I knew what I was doing the floodgates were open. The music, without being too loud for my ears, overwhelmed me. I sank into the chair and remained there I know not how long until the last sound had died away. Then I arose with a sigh and went down-stairs. As I went into the sitting room I saw with dismay the professor crossing the threshold. He must have heard the phonograph in the distance, for he had been running and was puffing like an engine.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, and for a time he was unable to say anything more, while I stood looking guilty and foolish before

him. At last he gained his breath, and with an effort controlling his indignation he said, slowly and deliberately:

"Mon cher, you know my secret and it is necessary that I should kill you."

I was not prepared for this solemn utterance, and the absurdity of his appearance and of my situation almost overcame my gravity. If he had threatened me with the police I might have been frightened, for I certainly had been engaged in housebreaking; but the idea of this venerable little Frenchman taking the law into his own hands was much more comical than terrifying. However, he was evidently in

earnest, for he nervously took off his blue glasses, fumbled in his pocket for his spectacles, put them on his nose and then stared about the room until his eyes rested on a rusty, old-fashioned shotgun which was reposing in a corner. I perceived his object and determined to resort to diplomacy.

"Professor," said I, dexterously stepping between him and the fowling piece, "I acknowledge that I have done wrong and am quite ready to suffer for it, but you of all men know how I was tempted. You can imagine what it is to hear such music and be forbidden to see its author. I admit that I know a part of your secret. These wonderful notes which I have heard came from your phonograph up-stairs. It is a remarkable invention, and I would not injure you in reaping your reward for the world. But what I wish to know is, whose voice does it reproduce? Tell me where this miraculous daughter of yours is and show me her photograph as a last favor."

He showed by his expression that my eloquence had touched him.

"Ah, my poor young friend," he replied, "I cannot assist you. She does not exist in this world."

"Do you mean to say that she is dead?" I asked, as my heart sank within me.

"No, no, she will never die, but she only lives here," and he pointed to his bald forehead.

"I see that you do not understand," he continued, "and since you know so much you might as well know all. Come, sit down and I will tell you." He offered me a cigarette, and when we had seated ourselves and begun to smoke he went on with his story.

"I am Professor Bernard of the law school at Dijon, but there are two things which I have always cared more about than law. One is music. I play very well on the violin, but I have given it up since my daughter was born," and he pointed up-stairs with his thumb. "It sounds like nothing now in comparison with her. My other favorite pursuit is electricity, and I have a little laboratory at home where I repeat all the latest experiments, and I have made electric lights and telephones and phonographs. But my music follows me everywhere and I have often tried to use electricity for it. Once I made a charming little organ that is worked by an electric engine, and the idea of employing

science for art is always in my mind. Have you ever seen the marks which the phonograph makes on strips of tinfoil? Well, one day I was trying my phonograph; two of my friends had sung into it the day before; one of them was a young lady, the other a law student. Neither of them had good voices, but on listening to my machine I was struck by the difference between them, his tones were so much harsher, and I wondered how the marks of the needle differed. I took out the strips and studied the indentations with a microscope. All at once the thought came to me that it would be possible to improve the marks if one only knew how to do it. I set to work at the lady's voice, and when I came to a poor note I stopped and tried to change it, and before long I had some success. It is hard work, for one must have very fine tools and a powerful glass, but I made a study of it for months. While I was toiling at this I happened by the purest accident to discover the invention which makes the voice so loud. But that is nothing, and you would not understand it if I explained it. Your American workmen will find it out soon by mere brute force of mind. That is a low, material thing; but my great triumph will be in art." He rubbed his hands with enthusiasm and an ecstatic smile spread over his face.

"Do you mean to say, professor," said I, "that this music of yours is nothing but the voice of your lady friend improved by you? I should like to know her, for she must sing superbly."

"Aha! I thought people would say that and give some of the credit to the original singer; so now I only use my own voice."

I was horror-struck at the thought.

"But the voice I have heard surely sounds like a woman's," I ventured.

"Yes, it is true, and that is the reason I call it my daughter, for it is my own daughter. My voice is rather high, and then I have altogether changed it with my instruments. Perhaps a woman's voice is the nearest to perfect tone, and that accounts for it; for my daughter's is perfect, or soon will be. I have no other strips but my own with me here."

His intonation when he spoke was a strident falsetto and I could easily believe that it was worse when he sang. My vision of a paradise on earth was dissolved in a moment; but still he kept on talking.



"I SEE THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND," HE CONTINUED.

"No one must know of this until it is completed. I came down here in fact to perfect it out of everyone's hearing, for they were beginning to question me at home. Oh, what a discovery it is! When it is announced you will not know me, the celebrated Professor Bernard, Commander of the Legion of Honor. And then, of course, there will be a statue of me at Dijon. I have selected the spot for it in the middle of the Place d'Armes opposite the Hotel de Ville. I shall stand like this," and he got up and posed himself with his arms folded, his head well back and his feet apart. "And then underneath will be a bronze group in alto-relief, 'Art leading Science captive.' Ah, what a day it will be for Dijon when they unveil it. Alas, it will have to be after my death—but you can be there, and how I envy you! All the world will be in the streets from early in the morning, and they will point out my house and say to strangers: 'We often used to see the great man come out of that door and walk along the street there toward the left and turn down that corner to the law school.' And then the procession will come: first, a carriage with a cab-

inet minister and the prefect; but I hope the monarchy will have been restored by that time and then we shall have a royal prince. After them you will see the bishop and senators and deputies—what a magnificent spectacle! There will be no band, though, but my dear daughter will sing the 'Marseillaise.' I have it almost ready; but I have not touched it for several weeks, and I must be patient and wait until I can do the work perfectly. I shall go up and play it for you now."

He left the room, quite forgetful of his murderous designs, and I took the opportunity to escape by the other door. I rushed away, actually fearing to hear the sound again, but from the distance it was borne to my ears, the French national anthem, sung as never before, and I felt indeed, like Ulysses, bound to the mast. From that day to this I have not heard a word regarding the professor or his daughter.

VI.

I can readily see that there seems to be a comic element in this recital; but I assure you the experience was a tragedy for

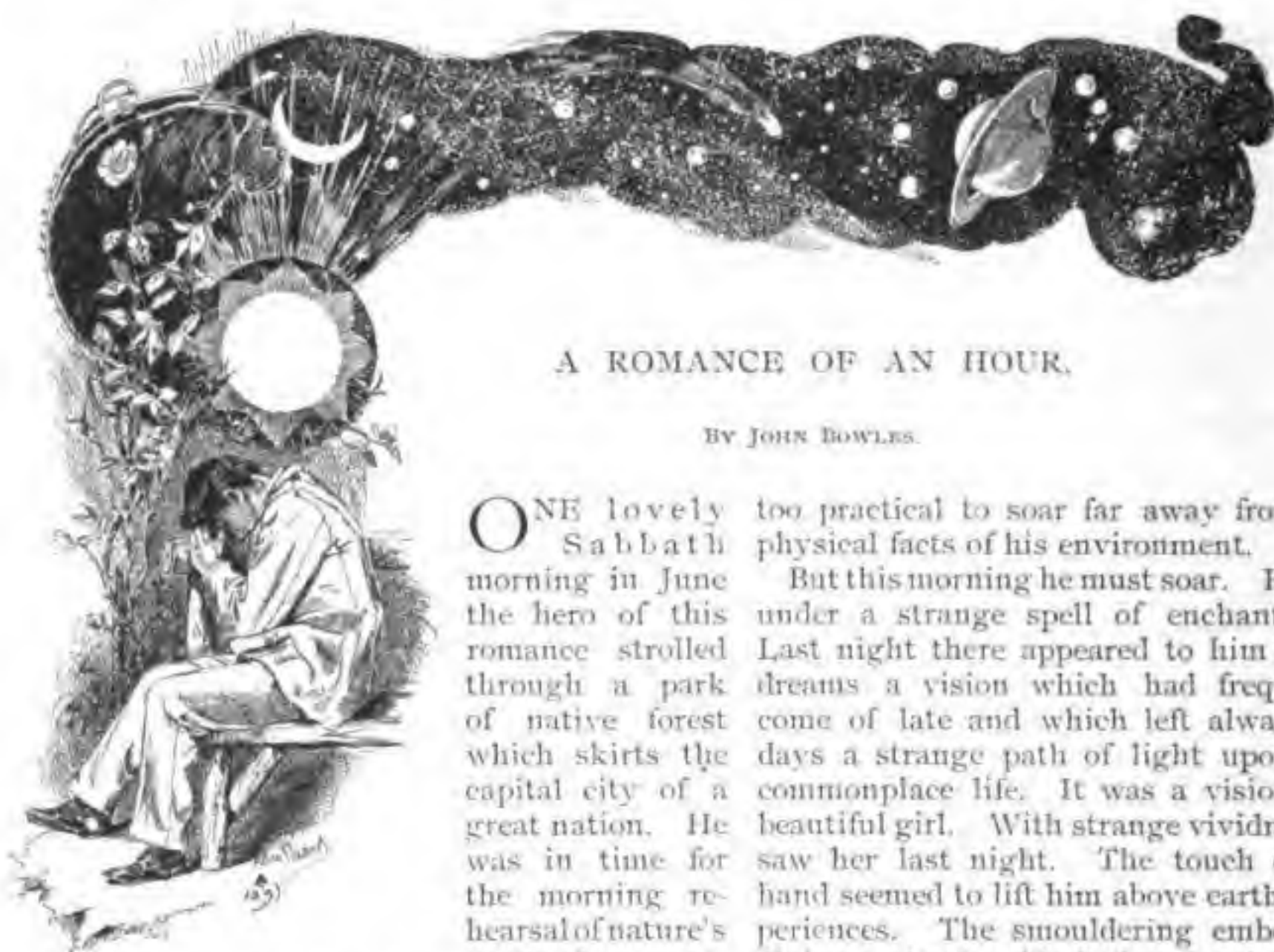
me. The dream of my life, just as it was apparently on the verge of realization, had shrivelled into worse than nothing—I might almost say into a piece of buffoonery. Since then the future has been bereft of its interest for me, and my picture has been my only consolation. I have altered it much since I showed it to the professor, and it is not yet quite finished, for I dread to give it the last touches and thus, as it were, bid it "farewell." I have thrown all the intensity of my passion into it. You can see the face there and the throat and mouth, but all vague, color rather than outline. But why should I endeavor vainly to put the picture into words,

when you may see it if you wish at the next Salon? You will not appreciate it at first, but go back to it again and again, and at last I am sure that you will hear a wondrous strain of melody and you will understand why I have called it "Song Triumphant" and written under it, "Vox et præterea nihil." For me at least it is a success. The very bitterness of my bereavement has given it strength. I sometimes think that that is the noblest work of art which is most fully the incarnation of a sorrow—a great grief transformed into a thing of beauty, so that we remember no more the anguish, for joy that something worthy to live is born into the world.

A JOURNEY.

BY ELLEN BURROUGHS.

UPROSE the Day when Night lay dead,
 She turned not back to kiss his cheek,
 But o'er the sombre eastern peak
 She soared, and touched it into red.
 Her strong wings scattered mist and cloud,
 As swiftly toward the highest blue,
 Unhindered, radiant, she flew.
 She sang for joy; she laughed aloud.
 "The midmost heaven," she cried, "is mine!
 The midmost heaven and half the earth.
 A million joys I bring to birth,
 Upon a million lovers shine!
 "I paint the grape, I gild the corn,
 I float the lilies on the lake,
 I set athrill in field and brake
 Fine strains of tiny flute and horn.
 "Ah, it is sweet," she said, and passed,
 Exulting still, down the sheer slope
 Of afternoon. Her heart of hope
 Went with her, dauntless, till, at last,
 Upon the far low-lying range
 Of hills, she spread a crimson cloud;
 From the pale mists she tore a shroud,
 And, sinking, faint with sense of change,
 She seemed to see a face bend o'er
 With kind, familiar eyes. She said:
 "Can it be you I left for dead?
 Can it be Night?" and spoke no more.
 Night wrapped her in his mantle gray;
 He kissed the quivering lids that slept;
 He bowed his silver head and wept—
 "How could she know, my love, my Day?"



A ROMANCE OF AN HOUR.

BY JOHN BOWLES.

ONE lovely Sabbath morning in June the hero of this romance strolled through a park of native forest which skirts the capital city of a great nation. He was in time for the morning rehearsal of nature's everlasting sym-

phony; bird and bee humming in wondrous harmony with rustling leaf, bud and blossom. He paused at the base of a pyramid of wild-rose brambles and, gazing at the only open blossom on the topmost branch, he said: "Yes, it is always so; the most tempting things are just beyond our reach; but, in spite of your apparent security I must capture you, my royal beauty." And springing up lightly he grasped the thorny stem and the prize was his.

What cared he for the wound on his finger? Had he not secured the rose, this rare and latest masterpiece of nature's craft?

He sat down at the base of a majestic oak and mused, intently gazing the while at the flower and then at the crimson drop which was its price.

He was what the world calls a dreamer. His Greek profile, light-brown beard and mustache, deep blue eyes and high forehead told of the mingled temperaments of poet, philosopher and artist, each striving for the mastery. One might suspect a lack of the sterner practical qualities, perhaps; yet the nature of this man was, after all,

too practical to soar far away from the physical facts of his environment.

But this morning he must soar. He was under a strange spell of enchantment. Last night there appeared to him in his dreams a vision which had frequently come of late and which left always for days a strange path of light upon this commonplace life. It was a vision of a beautiful girl. With strange vividness he saw her last night. The touch of her hand seemed to lift him above earthly experiences. The smouldering embers of divine aspiration kindled under the light of her glance. If he could always feel thus! What would matter the defeats and disappointments of life! So it was that this morning he felt an impatient longing to pierce beyond this material veil to the eternal verities which are just behind it.

As he drank the perfume of the rose he asked himself: "What is it? What is this fragrance? With enlarged vision could we see it? Do particles of sublimated matter assume shapes fantastic? or, as is more likely, do they appear in the form of the parent, as semi-spiritual roses?"

"And thou too, oh, ruby drop, tell me of yourself and the shapes divine which make up your royal coloring. Is it possible that you too are composed of atoms fashioned after the Divine Prototype? Do you bear the image of man in some semi-spiritual resemblance?"

As he mused thus he became gradually conscious, without any surprise, that he was in the presence of a vast multitude of people, beings like himself, but who were swaying to and fro in the wild tumult of despair which follows a great calamity. So might Lisbon have looked

the moment after the earth yawned, or Atlantis when in the throes of cataclysmic disaster. There were wild prayers, entreaties, to him to save them. Why were they addressed to him?

Gradually the truth was borne in upon his consciousness that these beings were a part of himself. His organism was their universe, and beyond its limits they had no power to conceive of existence. The prick of the thorn was to them a cataclysm—a wild upheaval which threw them open to an environment to which they were not adapted and in which they must inevitably perish. He heard them petitioning him with self-accusing prayers to save them from his just wrath, which no doubt their sins had provoked. How could he reach them; how make them understand that this misfortune was not retributive at all but had its origin in complications far beyond their little universe?

Suddenly there appeared two beings, evidently of a different type, bright, radiant, ineffable—a man with the face of a sage leading by the hand a fair creature, seemingly his daughter. It needed but one glance to see that she was the same, the lovely visitant of his dreams.

With an air of calm authority the man spoke, and his words brought instant peace to the distracted and disordered multitude.

"My children," he said, "be not dismayed, be patient and wait. You are in the hands of law and of love; not at the mercy of caprice and of anger. I know whereof I speak, and I tell you we may trust the everlasting and eternal Power to heal every wound. You are in divine keeping and all is well. Each of you has a duty to perform in the work of repair, let each see that he does it faithfully and well. The reward will be swift and sure." Then turning, he said: "You are no doubt surprised at what you have seen. You have had a glimpse of a hitherto unsuspected world. Come with me and I will reveal more of its marvellous economy."

In another moment they found themselves in a region of strange charm and beauty. No radiant sun seemed to shine from the zenith of its heaven, but a soft diffused light illumined the atmosphere.

"This," said the sage, "is as it were the Dome of the Temple. It is the high-

est part of the organism, the seat of the directive energies which control the rest. In other words, you are at this moment exploring the recesses of your own brain. Among the myriads of beings composing your organism, only the bravest and strongest reach this supreme elevation and participate in these exalted functions, and there again they are sifted and classified according to their fitness for the higher or lower activities indicated in your system of knowledge by the 'white' and the 'gray.' I shall use another of your terms to make you comprehend the process by which these changes are accomplished. It is by 'selection.' Selection determines everything. Every atom or being becomes a part of some one of the various organs or activities of your organism by means of a preference, inclination or affinity, which ranges it with an absolute fidelity to its essential nature. There are no arbitrary rulings in creation, be it great or small, and the world you are now observing is subject to the identical law which controls the suns in their courses."

He who was a guest in this strange world looked about him with an eager curiosity, listening the while to his venerable guide.

The atmosphere of the place produced a singular exaltation of spirit. He could remember only on one or two occasions having for one brief moment attained the sort of joy he now experienced. The dross of life seemed to have dropped away. He could not imagine the existence of anything ignoble.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, drawing in a deep inspiration of the strange ether, "this is worth living."

The old man smiled and said: "My son, you are in your native air. I knew that you were suited to it and that is the reason I conducted you hither. Some could not breathe in this region of quickened forces, but all that involves much you cannot understand now. My daughter has long watched you," he added, smiling again. "Come here, Aleta." The beautiful girl was at his side in a moment. He looked at her fixedly for only an instant and then went on: "You were right, my dear girl. Your friend is well fitted to understand these mysteries, and you shall guide his feet while I lead his thought to a new understanding of the secrets of his own



IN ANOTHER MOMENT THEY WERE LOOKING DOWN UPON AN ASSEMBLY OF WORSHIPPERS.

being. I am Alta," he said, turning to his companion, "and you may call me so, if you will."

"That will indeed be a privilege, Sire," was the reverent reply. "And, Sire, a moment ago you called me 'Son.' It had a thrilling sweetness to me. Will you call me so again and ever after?"

Alta smiled. "Yes, I understand, you love her. That is but natural, because she is the other half of your own soul, and she loves you under the same law of necessity."

"Loves me!" gasped the youth. "Aleta, tell me, is this so? Can it be that there is such happiness for me?"

"Yes," she said, with simple frankness, "I love you;" and, as if proud of the self-surrender, she yielded to the embrace of his enfolding arms. Then lifting a face which shone with a new and strange brightness, she said: "I think I have a right to name you since we belong to each other. Alta may call you 'Son,' but for me you shall be 'Hero.' My Hero for all time," she added, in a tone of rapturous tenderness, as a baptismal tear fell upon the bent head of her lover.

A wondrous calm pervaded the soul of Hero, as, with Aleta's hand in his, they wandered through the shining recesses—crystalline labyrinths of this strange place.

"You might be here a thousand years," said Alta, "and yet not exhaust the marvels of this place. There are myriads of departments, each conducted with such absolute precision, a microscope of a million diameters would not detect a flaw in the work. The nature of these activities I cannot explain to you, but their import is tremendous. You see those messengers speeding with the fleetness of light from one point to another? They bear messages to and from every remote part of your being, and bring reports of all coming within the cognizance of your sense and perception.

"Do you observe a change in the conditions? There is some exciting cause, which gives increased brilliancy to the light and a peculiar rarity to the ether. This is sometimes produced by the approach of another organism to which this one is allied; but in this case the cause is different, as I will explain to you later. Lean on me, my son," he said, looking at his companion intently.

"I do feel a little faint," said Hero, ac-

cepting the proffered support. He watched Aleta, who, in a sort of impatient rapture, floated on beyond them, and seemed melting into the strange fantastic beauty of the scene. The light dazzled with its growing intensity, augmented now by electric coruscations. The changing variety of beautiful form and color fatigued while it charmed. The ether pulsated in a wild rush of waves which were color to the eye, music to the ear and fragrance to the sense. Hero felt as if he were suffocating from excess of perception, and grasping his forehead with both hands, uttered a cry and fell at Alta's feet in a swoon.

In another moment he opened his eyes upon the familiar forest. There were the pines and oaks, and among the brown needles and leaves at his feet lay the rose he had plucked. Alta was holding his hand, and ah! wonder of wonders! Aleta was murmuring sweet words of tenderness as she bathed his head with water from the brook. "Have I dreamed?" he said, "such a strange place!"

"No," said Alta gravely, "you have not dreamed. What you saw is reality. You have looked in upon yourself, and have some idea now of the complexity of your own being. You have learned that the fate of countless multitudes hangs upon your every thought and act; that your volition determines their destiny, while you in turn are made wretched if any one of them fails to perform his part in the economy of your organism. The interdependence is as intimate as it is possible to be; for, in fact, you are they, and they are you. You have looked into the recesses of your own brain and have seen, if you have not understood, the marvellous workings of its processes. Do you not realize now how grave a responsibility it is to live?"

"But your head aches and we must find an antidote for all this introspection. Do you know why the condition grew so intense and so agitating during the last moments of our stay in that place?"

"No," said Hero, "I do not know, but it seemed as if I should go mad from excess of perception."

"Yes," said Alta, smiling, "that was the exciting cause. It was your mental organ we were traversing, and as your own excitement increased, the conditions there corresponded."

"How marvellous," exclaimed Hero.

"Could you see, as I have often seen," Alta went on, "the brain of a genius at the moment when a discovery dawns upon him—it is like the crater of a volcano. But you are fatigued, you must have no more excitement now. Our researches shall be outside of yourself. You shall see your fellow-men, not as you have always known them, but as they appear to me and as they are. Do you see, my son, that luminous spot yonder? It is caused by the conjunction of many spheres, or men, as you would say, drawn together by a common interest and mutual attraction. They have assembled to worship. That steady diffused light indicates the sympathy or the rapport which fuses the souls of the multitude. This is well suited to my purpose as an illustration, so thither we will go."

He gave a sweeping movement of his uplifted hand, and away they were speeding through space toward the softly illumined spot Alta had indicated. In another moment they were looking down upon an assembly of worshippers. Each individual was encircled in a halo of shimmering light, appearing, indeed, like a "sphere," as called by Alta. A network of lines could be discerned, like fine silver threads, in which all seemed enmeshed. Alta anticipated Hero's question and said, "Those are lines of force, attractive and repellent, which draw these spheres toward or away from each other. They are the invisible currents which establish the natural relations and association among people."

Hero looked for some moments in silence and then said: "I observe there is an infinite variety in the appearance of these spheres."

"Yes," said Alta, "and to me that is as full of meaning as is a printed page to you. Your scientists have discovered a system of lines in the spectrum of remote heavenly bodies, which tells their nature and elements. I see before me lines which in the same way disclose the innermost impulses of each soul, love, truth, hypocrisy, hatred, jealousy, are all revealed in that encompassing halo. You observe those lines of force," he went on, "which stream from the head, are in some individuals much longer and brighter than in others? Those are the men who will in-

evitably dominate the others. Then, too, there are different qualities of this force, good and evil, that you cannot discern as I do, but you see clearly as I, that a man's personality is not limited within the boundary of his visible physical organism. See how each one extends—some reaching out an influence which penetrates every being in the assembly, while others again have only a little feeble radius of light, which scarcely reaches his nearest neighbor; but you will observe all are interlaced and entwined by these invisible currents, which make the whole world and, indeed, the whole creation, akin; so that just as in the minute beings you saw a while ago in your own organism there is an interdependence, and harm to one must be an injury to all the rest, as all partake of these same living currents, which flow like your life blood through the arteries and veins of the race of men."

"Oh, what a complex world!" exclaimed Hero.

"Complex, indeed," answered Alta; "why, my son, what you have seen is only the beginning of an endless chain. The myriads of beings on the earth, like those before us, constitute a whole, which is again only an integral part of some mightier whole, and that again only a part of another and more gigantic combination. And so on and on, till the brain grows giddy with addition and multiplication, and still we have not yet reached the end, the all, the sum total which is the universe."

"Then if it has no limit it can have no centre," said Hero, "and if there be an impossible maximum there must also be an impossible minimum. I am lost, lost, in this immensity."

"You are quite right, my son," said Alta; "there is no boundary line, no frontier, and every man makes for himself a centre. The place where he stands is for him the centre of the universe. I am pleased to find your mind so receptive to these things," he added. "You are equally right in seeing the infinity of the chain leading toward the minute. An impossible minimum follows an impossible maximum. What you call matter, being simply an aggregation of particles, which are in turn composed of other and smaller particles, so that you may subtract and divide till the brain grows weary with the

task—as it did just now in multiplying—and still you will have molecules susceptible of division, until we arrive at a point where the atoms are so infinitesimal that all the solids known to science are as honeycomb to the many times divided molecules."

"Then," said Hero, "why may not this ethereal matter, infinite in attributes, why may it not be spirit?"

Alta shook his head gravely. "The time is not ripe for you to know the relation of spirit and matter. You have much to learn before you are ready for that great mystery, but this much I may tell you. Spirit is to matter what the general is to the army, everywhere present by his cohesive and directive force, without which, matter, like the rank and file of the army without the general, would become a disorganized and ineffectual mass. And as the power of the chief in command is shared by the next in authority, and so on down to the ranks, so the universe requires every officer and man to do his whole duty at his post. Now listen! The leader of this assembly is about to pray."



THERE LAY A FAIR CITY.

Words of supplication and entreaty followed those of invocation and praise. They seemed wrung from a bruised heart and agonized soul, and dwelt upon the just wrath of an offended God, one who must have the shedding of blood to appease him before there can be forgiveness and peace.

Alta's brow contracted, and, sighing deeply, he said: "Poor children, poor children, why can they not understand?"

"Now observe," said Aleta to Hero. "Father has come into touch with this man's nature; note the change in his speech."

Almost while she spoke the bowed head

was raised and words eloquent with hope and trust electrified his listeners. "Thou art not a God of vengeance, but of love. We are not victims of Thy wrath, but children of Thy divine heart. We may grope and stumble, for the way is dark, but Thou wilt not permit one of Thy children to perish in darkness and despair."

The sensation in the assembly was profound. Some few lingered to admonish their pastor that he was making salvation too cheap, too easy. But the preacher heard or heeded not.

There was a life-giving touch upon his bowed head, from which there streamed a wave of hope and aspiration which seemed to



flood his soul. The touch was Alta's, whose invisible hands rested upon the head of the good man.

"Now, my children, I must leave you for a while," said Alta. Turning to Hero, he added: "Aleta will be your guide, and if you desire it, will convey you to scenes far beyond the region of earthly pilgrimages. She has a brave spirit and a strong grasp upon the forces which belong to our plane of existence. She loves you much, Hero, and you have before you an eternity of joy beyond the power of the human mind to conceive," and with a farewell wave of the hand he vanished.

Hero trembled as he found himself for the first moment alone with this divinely and yet humanly lovely creature. Words seemed a coarse profanation of the meas-

ureless, ineffable feeling which filled his soul! He opened his arms and she glided into his embrace. Whether it was hours or moments he knew not. What had he to do with time now? She loved him. His restless soul had found peace, he had become a part of eternity. Rising and setting suns meant nothing to him forevermore!

Did she speak? He knew not, and yet he knew her thought. She was telling him how long she had loved him, how she had tried—vainly tried—to make him understand that she belonged to him. And then, had she not suffered? Had she not seen him clothe an earthly object in her own attributes, and try to enshrine a creature of clay in the home she had beautified for herself? When he had found his earthly love fading in disappointment and bitterness; and she—she had been almost glad when he wept. "Still I comforted you," she seemed to say. "Your outstretched arms often enfolded me, yet you only dimly knew it, and thought you dreamed. Ah! dearest, the other was the dream, and this the real. If you doubt the reality of this moment," she said, laughing, "look down there and see what is spread out before us."

Hero looked as she bid him. There lay a fair city. Did he not know it well! Its ample white avenues were fringed with waving verdure which only half concealed beautiful homes, and many a graceful spire, like the jewelled finger of faith, pointing heavenward; while here and there arose great marble and granite piles of architecture, with mighty domes, and out of the very earth there sprang a cloud-piercing, spotless shaft, whose glistening top looked beyond the river, to the blue hills on the other side.

They hovered for a moment over this beautiful scene and then drifted on until they looked down upon a nation's dormitory, where her patriot slain peacefully slumber, while on cushioned wheels and with velvet tread, devoted living pay tribute to heroes dead!

Often had Hero visited this hallowed spot, but never before had he seen the golden light which enveloped it, nor the radiant beings keeping watch o'er these green mounds!

On and on they floated, over broad fields and fertile valleys; the lowing of the cattle

and joyous peals of laughter mingling with the hum of the busy, simple life below, in the familiar cadence of earthly sounds, which struck strangely now on Hero's ear.

"Why do we come here?" he had thought rather than said, to which Aleta replied: "Reminiscence and habit open up pathways through which the soul naturally moves; besides, you love these scenes, and the desire to see them, although only vague and not formulated into a wish, creates an impulse towards them. Oh! you have so much to learn, my Hero. To desire is to be and to wish for is to have."

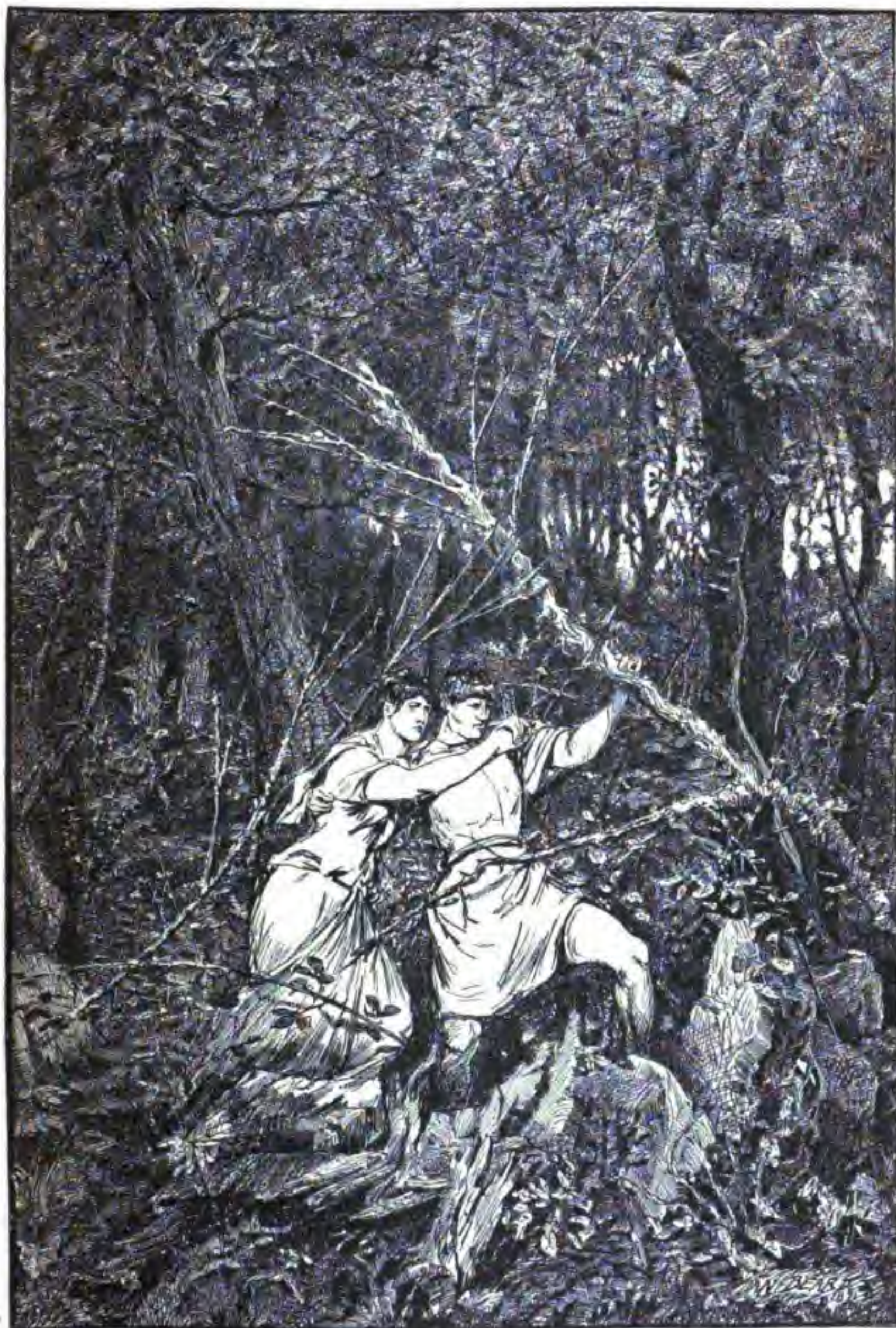
Hero knew well the scene which was now spread out beneath their gaze. Every towering peak of this mountain range so blue was a familiar friend. That rugged pinnacle with the human profile in stone was keeping watch just as of yore over that lovely village nestling at its feet. And there was the same great encircling valley, fertile, rich, beautiful; and beyond was the cavern Luray, that strange treasure house, filled by nature as if in affluent sport of creative fancy.

A desire to descend into its unexplored depths flitted across his mind. He was only conscious of meeting a tender reproach from Aleta's eyes, as he found himself descending a dark, slippery incline, with alternate illumination and inky shadows so intense as seemingly to cut the very cord of the optic nerve. He felt the clasp of Aleta's hand, firm, yet soft as eiderdown, and on he went, down, down, through labyrinths of winding caverns, the air growing heavy with sepulchral odors and a horror of chill dampness clinging to stalactite and stalagmite, augmenting the dangers of the slippery path.

Soon he felt rather than saw the presence of innumerable creatures, and there arose a horrid din of subterranean sounds clashing out of harmony, each grating discord seeming to say: "Go back! go back! We like you not: what do you here?"

Hero could bear no more. "Aleta!" he cried, "let us get away from this horrible place."

Instantly he felt the sweet breath of the open air and the sunshine. Aleta's lips were pressed upon his own, and she laughed merrily as she said: "So you do not like the underworld? Ah, well! you must learn to be careful about what you



NETWORK OF VINES ENTANGLED THEM, SHARP STONES CUT THEIR FEET.

wish. Remember what I told you. It was horrible," she said, shuddering, "but I dared not leave you to yourself. Come, dearest, let us away to yonder shining peak, and forget all about this cavern and its ghostly occupants."

How beautiful, how tempting was the landscape from that greater elevation, bathed in the sunlit splendor of late afternoon! "It is beautiful," she said, pressing Hero's hand in sympathy, "and I do not wonder you desire to be there. Let us go," she said impulsively, and instantly their feet were on firm, prosaic earth, the clouds flitting and the trees waving over their heads. They were a part of the landscape they had beheld but a moment ago.

Hero had never realized so fully as at this moment the joy of possessing this divinely lovely girl. Now, with his feet pressing the green turf, he knew it was reality, not a deluding vision of bliss. She loved him and was to be his own through all eternity. He extended his arms toward her, but she shrank from his embrace with a little shiver and stood apart, pale, silent, her eyes fixed on the ground, where her feet seemed too firmly fixed.

"Dearest, what is it?" said Hero in alarm.

She tried to smile, as she answered: "I think we had better go down to yonder plateau where we see those tents, but I am afraid you will have to lead here," she faltered; "I do not feel able to guide you in this place."

"Lean on me, dear one," said Hero proudly. How glad he was to have her look to him for protection! But the way was difficult, and he scarcely knew how to surmount the intricate dangers of the descent. Network of vines entangled them, sharp stones cut their feet, and sometimes further progress seemed absolutely impossible. Hero felt as if struggling in a strange nightmare. A benumbing sense of insufficient strength and skill for what he had undertaken dismayed him.

Aleta sighed deeply. "We will rest, darling," he said; "you are not used to these rough ways."

A tree had fallen across the path and he drew her down upon the moss-covered seat. Her eyes looked into his with an expression of pathetic weariness and hopelessness. He tried to tell her of his

love, of the eternity of happiness that awaited them. A dread chill smote his heart as he saw her withdraw her hand from his and examine it closely, almost as if she expected to find a stain upon it, saying absently: "Eternity! How do we know there is an eternity? Forgive me if I pain you," she said, "but since we came here all seems so dark, the other with its joy seems only a dream. I behold things now in the light of reason. The warmth and color have faded out of everything in its cold rays."

The sun was sinking below the horizon. Its glow of crimson and purple faded into pink and gray and these in turn deepened into the sombre tints which precede the night. Still they sat speechless, two dumb souls in the shadow of a dense forest, far from human habitation. Hero aroused himself from the lethargy which overwhelmed him and tried to talk again of their love, but his stammering tongue gave only feeble expression and Aleta answered absently: "I think, my Hero, I do not quite understand you." He realized that every effort engulfed them more and more in the quicksand of hopelessness.

In agonized fear of something, he knew not what, he sprang to his feet. "Let us go," he said; "let us get away from this place to the plain below. Lean on me, dearest, I will take you safely." But in the growing darkness they stumbled and fell, rising again to clamber over boulders and fallen trees with despairing effort, and finally reached a wall of shelving rock which forbade another step. Aleta sank upon the ground with a cry of anguish, and then, lifting her face, said: "Oh, Father, Alta, we perish!" In another moment, calm, radiant, majestic, Alta stood before them. "My poor children," he said, "why would you come back to these physical conditions? Why did you sink to the level of the commonplace?" Then as his hands took one of each of theirs, the solid earth seemed to grow luminous, even transparent. Once more they realized that to think and to desire was to have and to be. Ah! the joy of this mastery of the spirit over the natural physical forces.

They sped away, away. Earth had faded into a little scintillating ball in space; its attendant moon, which had for

a time expanded into a great luminous mass, was now a minute point of light. They were threading their way in those vast unvisited regions among the stars. A new sun blazed upon their path, growing, expanding. What had seemed mere points of light about it were clustering groups of satellites, glittering like splendid jewels about the great central fiery mass, which at last seemed a mountain of flame; while each satellite (there were a dozen or more) was at least as large as our own sun, each carrying its own encircling moons, none less than three and some nine, and each of these larger than our own moon at the full and blazing in a variety and intensity of color beyond the capacity of the human eye to conceive. Our own solar system diminished into a mere rushlight in the heavens beside the splendor of this family of stars. It is not strange that Hero prostrated himself before the God of such a universe, and said: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him!" What a mighty creation is this," he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Alta calmly, "yet one conscious soul is greater than all these. This is only the theatre, the stage, for the real life, where we are the actors. You know so little, it is difficult to make you understand, but the glory does not lie so much in immensities, but rather in the subtle perfection of the essence."

"And are these worlds the theatres of an existence like ours on earth?" said Hero reverently.

"Like? Yes and no. Like in kind, but in degree as like as you are like the oyster. There is an intensity of experience here you could not comprehend, and yet its elements are all contained within you, and all exist in your world, which is now invisibly circling about that faint star yonder," saying which, he pointed to a feebly flickering point of light across the trackless space beyond.

"Is that our earth?" said Hero.

"Your earth?" and Alta smiled as at the guesses of a child; "that is the entire solar system. The sun and its remotest satellites are from this distance merged into one point of light, to which your earth contributes a ray too feeble to be seen. And now I must leave you. Aleta will re-conduct you over the path we have come."

"Not yet," said Hero, passionately grasping Alta's hand. "Tell me, first, how I may obtain this mastery over the forces of nature. What is the secret which unlocks these glories? Impart this to me, I implore, before you go."

"It is not a thing which can be bestowed or imparted," replied the sage. "It is simply a matter of growth, a natural unfolding of germinant powers by means of minute processes of growth, not by fiat. Impatient souls like yours would leap at once into the higher life, but does one leap from the cradle to the senate chamber? Can one read without learning the alphabet? There can be no unnatural termination of the period of tuition on the lower plane. Can you feed on unripe fruit? The fragrance of the rose is the outcome of the blossom, the bud and the germ. You must patiently tend through sunshine and shadow, in summer sun and winter blast, for the ripening of this fruit, and not daring, so much as patience, is needed."

"Well, at least tell me before you go something of the mysterious relation of spirit to matter. I have so longed to know. Can they exist the one without the other, or are they inseparable, or even identical?"

"Yes, that is the old question," replied Alta. "I too struggled hopelessly with it in my own earth life; but how vain, how futile it was. The race of man has not arrived at a point of development where a solution of this mystery is essential or even possible. When it has it will know. All the currents of the universe would continue to flow as now, if this secret were wrested from the hidden archives. The vast avenues of advancement open broadly, inviting men of thought and earnest purpose to pursue the orderly path of progress which leads to an expanding perception of God's universe. Move patiently along the path, your face set steadily toward the higher, but always realizing that it can only be reached through the lower—that the concrete is the school which fits for the essential life, or life in the essence." With these words Alta waved a majestic farewell and vanished utterly from view.

Hero was alone with Aleta in this vast ocean of space—no North, no South, no night, no day, no clock to tell the hours nor mark the seconds. Before him the glittering splendors of this strange and

nameless sun with its satellites, and in his arms the being who was to him more than all the universe besides. The rapture of a divine soul-satisfying love filled his being. Is it strange that he saw not the clustering star worlds, expanding and diminishing as they sped by them along over the pathless regions of space? It seemed but a moment of time when Aleta, with a little sigh of regret, said, "Do you recognize this spot?"

Looking down he beheld the waving tops of the pines, and near that pyramid of wild roses he thought he saw the sleeping form of a man, his face hidden by the clustering blossoms.

A vague terror smote him. "You are not going to leave me?" he gasped.

"Yes, dearest," she answered, "for a time, at least. It must be so, but I shall come again. This shall be our trysting place," she said, smiling, "and when I come to you hereafter will you know it is I or will you think you dream? Oh, Hero, I could not bear that now. But I will give you a key which will always unlock the door dividing us," and with both arms about his neck she whispered into his ear the magic word which would always bring her to his side, adding tenderly: "It will not be needed long, dearest, and then all eternity together! And if you need me, remember, all obstacles will melt

before that word which you have but to utter and we will be face to face and heart to heart."

Overwhelmed and agitated as he was, Hero could still not resist a strange fascination which drew him toward the partly concealed figure of the sleeping man under the great oak.

Aleta smiled sadly as she saw this. "If you awaken him I shall have to go," she said with a warning gesture. At this moment she lifted her head and stood for a moment as if listening. Then turning to him she said: "The time has come. It has been beautiful as a dream, but it is over. I must go. Remember, Hero, it is not a dream; and now farewell."

"My love," said Hero, "how can I let you go?" His lips met hers, his very soul seemed departing in an ecstasy of love.

He felt as if he were sinking down, down, into fathomless depths; then, with a strange feeling of having lost something priceless, he opened his eyes and looked at his empty arms.

From a distance came the hum of the busy city, the wild-rose brambles rustled gently in the breeze, there was the drop of blood on his finger, dried into a tiny spot of dark red, and at his feet lay the fading rose.

And the romance of an hour was finished.



THEY SPED AWAY, AWAY.

ILLUSTRATED

BY

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Henry James



"BARON MET HIS ADVANCE BY MOUNTING HIM ON A SHOULDER."

JERSEY VILLAS.

BY HENRY JAMES.

I.

"THERE are several objections to it, but I'll take it if you'll alter it," Mr. Locket's rather curt note had said; and there was no waste of words in the postscript in which he had added: "If you'll come in and see me, I'll show you what I mean." This communication had reached Jersey Villas by the first post, and Peter Baron had scarcely swallowed the matutinal muffin before he got into motion to obey the editorial behest. He knew that such precipitation looked eager, and he had no desire to look eager—it was not in his interest; but how could he maintain a godlike calm, principled though he was in favor of it, the first time one of the great magazines had accepted, even with a cruel reservation, a specimen of his ardent young genius?

It was not till, like a child with a seashell at his ear, he began to be aware of

the great roar of the "underground," that, in his third-class carriage, the cruelty of the reservation penetrated, with the taste of acrid smoke, to his inner sense. It was really degrading to be eager in the face of having to "alter." Peter Baron tried to figure to himself at that moment that he was not flying to betray the extremity of his need, but hurrying to fight for some of those passages of superior boldness which were exactly what the conductor of the *Promiscuous Review* would be sure to be down upon. He made believe—as if to the greasy fellow passenger opposite—that he felt indignant; but he saw that to the small round eye of this still more downtrodden brother he represented selfish success. He would have liked to linger in the conception that he had been "approached" by the *Promiscuous*; but whatever might be

thought in the office of that periodical of some of his flights of fancy, there was no want of vividness in his occasional suspicion that he passed there for a familiar bore. The only thing that was clearly flattering was the fact that the *Promiscuous* rarely published fiction. He should, therefore, be associated with a deviation from a solemn habit, and that would more than make up to him for a phrase in one of Mr. Locket's inexorable earlier notes, a phrase which still rankled, about his showing no symptom of the really creative faculty. "You don't seem able to keep a character together," this pitiless monitor had somewhere else remarked. Peter Baron, as he sat in his corner while the train stopped, considered, in the befogged gaslight, the bookstall standard of literature and asked himself whose character had fallen to pieces now. Tormenting, indeed, had always seemed to him such a fate as to have the creative head without the creative hand.

It should be mentioned, however, that before he started on his mission to Mr. Locket his attention had been briefly engaged by an incident occurring at Jersey Villas. On leaving the house (he lived at No. 3, the door of which stood open to a small front garden) he encountered the lady who, a week before, had taken possession of the rooms on the ground floor, the "parlors" of Mrs. Bundy's terminology. He had heard her, and from his window, two or three times, had seen her pass in and out, and this observation had created in his mind a vague prejudice in her favor. Such a prejudice, it was true, had been subjected to a violent test; it had been fairly apparent that she had a light step, but it was still less to be overlooked that she had a cottage piano. She had, furthermore, a little boy, and a very sweet voice, of which Peter Baron had caught the accent, not from her singing (for she only played), but from her gay admonitions to her child, whom she occasionally allowed to amuse himself—under restrictions very publicly enforced—in the tiny black patch which, as a forecourt to each house, was held, in the humble row, to be a feature. Jersey Villas stood in pairs, semi-detached, and Mrs. May—such was the name under which the new lodger presented herself—had been admitted to the house as confessedly musical. Mrs.

Bundy, the earnest proprietress of No. 3, who considered her "parlors" (they were a dozen feet square) even more attractive, if possible, than the second floor with which Baron had had to content himself—Mrs. Bundy, who reserved the drawing room for a casual dressmaking business, had threshed out the subject of the new lodger in advance with our young man, reminding him that her affection for his own person was a proof that, other things being equal, she positively preferred tenants who were clever.

This was the case with Mrs. May; she had satisfied Mrs. Bundy that she was not a simple strummer. Mrs. Bundy admitted to Peter Baron that, for herself, she had a weakness for a pretty tune, and Peter could honestly reply that his ear was equally sensitive. Everything would depend on the "touch" of the newcomer. Mrs. May's piano would blight his existence if her hand should prove heavy or her selections vulgar; but if she played agreeable things and played them in an agreeable way, she would render him rather a service while he smoked the pipe of "form." Mrs. Bundy, who wanted to let her rooms, guaranteed on the part of the stranger a first-class talent, and Mrs. May, who evidently knew thoroughly what she was about, had not falsified this somewhat rash prediction. She never played in the morning, which was Baron's working time, and he found himself listening with pleasure, at other hours, to her discreet and melancholy strains. He really knew little about music, and the only criticism he would have made of Mrs. May's conception of it was that she seemed devoted to the dismal. It was not, however, that these strains were not pleasant to him; they floated up, on the contrary, as a sort of conscious response to some of his broodings and doubts. Harmony, therefore, would have reigned supreme, had it not been for the singularly bad taste of No. 4. Mrs. May's piano was on the free side of the house, and was regarded by Mrs. Bundy as open to no objection but that of their own gentleman, who was so reasonable. As much, however, could not be said of the gentleman of No. 4, who had not even Mr. Baron's excuse of being "littery" (he kept a bull-terrier and had five hats—the street could count them), and whom,

if you had listened to Mrs. Bundy, you would have supposed to be divided from the obnoxious instrument by walls and corridors, obstacles and intervals, of massive structure and fabulous extent. This gentleman had taken up an attitude which had now passed into the phase of correspondence and compromise; but it was the opinion of the immediate neighborhood that he had not a leg to stand upon, and on whatever subject the sentiment of Jersey Villas might have been vague, it was not so on the rights and the wrongs of landladies.

Mrs. May's little boy was in the garden as Peter Baron issued from the house, and his mother appeared to have come out for a moment, bareheaded, to see that he was doing no harm. She was discussing with him the responsibility that he might incur by passing a piece of string round one of the iron palings and pretending he was in command of a "geegee;" but it happened that at the sight of the other lodger the child was seized with a finer perception of the drivable. He rushed at Baron with a flourish of the bridle, shouting, "Oo, geegee!" in a manner productive of some refined embarrassment to his mother. Baron met his advance by mounting him on a shoulder and feigning to prance an instant, so that by the time that this performance was over (it took but a few seconds) the young man felt introduced to Mrs. May. Her smile struck him as charming, and such an impression shortens many steps. She said, "Oh, thank you—you musn't let him worry you," and then as he, having put down the child and raised his hat, was turning away, she added: "It's very good of you not to complain of my piano."

"I particularly enjoy it—you play beautifully," said Peter Baron.

"I have to play, you see—it's all I can do. But the people next door don't like it, though my room, you know, is not against their wall. Therefore, I thank you for letting me tell them that you, in the house, don't find me a nuisance."

She looked gentle and bright as she spoke, and as the young man's eyes rested on her the tolerance for which she expressed herself indebted seemed to him the least indulgence she might count upon. But he only laughed and said, "Oh, no,

you're not a nuisance!" and felt more and more introduced.

The little boy, who was handsome, hereupon clamored for another ride and she took him up herself, to divert his importunity. She stood a moment with the child in her arms, and he put his fingers exuberantly into her hair, so that while she smiled at Baron she slowly, permissively, shook her head to get rid of them.

"If they really make a fuss I'm afraid I shall have to go," she went on.

"Oh, don't go!" Baron broke out, with a sudden expressiveness which made his voice, as it fell upon his ear, strike him as the voice of another. She gave a vague exclamation, and, nodding slightly, but not unsociably, passed back into the house. She had made an impression which remained till the other party to the conversation reached the railway station, when it was superseded by the thought of his prospective discussion with Mr. Locket. This was a proof of the intensity of that interest.

The aftertaste of the later conference was also intense for Peter Baron, who quitted his editor with his manuscript under his arm. He had had the question out with Mr. Locket, and he was in a flutter which ought to have been a sense of triumph and which, indeed, at first he succeeded in regarding in this light. Mr. Locket had had to admit that there was an idea in his story, and that was a tribute which Baron was in a position to make the most of. But there was also a scene which scandalized the editorial conscience and which the young man had promised to rewrite. The idea that Mr. Locket had been so good as to disengage depended, for clearness, mainly on this scene; so it was easy to see his objection was perverse. This perception was probably a part of the joy in which Peter Baron walked as he carried home a contribution it pleased him to classify as accepted. He walked to work off his excitement and to think in what manner he should rewrite. He went some distance without settling this point and then, as it began to bother him, he looked vaguely into shop windows for solutions and hints. Mr. Locket lived in the depths of Chelsea, in a little old, panelled, covetable house, and Baron took his way homeward along the King's Road. There was a new amusement for

him, a fresher bustle, in a London walk in the morning ; these were hours that he habitually spent at his writing table, in the awkward attitude engendered by the poor piece of furniture, one of the rickety features of Mrs. Bundy's second floor, which had to serve as his altar of literary sacrifice. If, by exception, he went out when the day was young, he noticed that life seemed younger with it ; there were livelier industries to profit by, and there were shopgirls, often rosy, to look at ; a different air was in the streets and a chaff of traffic for the observer of manners to catch. Above all, it was the time when poor Baron made his purchases, which were wholly of the wandering mind ; his extravagances, for some mysterious reason, were all matutinal, and he had a foreknowledge that if ever he should ruin himself it would be well before noon. He felt lavish this morning, on the strength of what the Promiscuous would do for him ; he had lost sight, for the moment, of what he should have to do for the

Promiscuous. Before the old bookshops and printshops, the crowded panes of the curiosity mongers and the desirable exhibitions of mahogany "done up," he used, by an innocent process, to commit luxurious follies. He refurnished Mrs. Bundy with a freedom that cost her nothing, and lost himself in pictures of a transfigured second floor.

On this particular occasion the King's Road proved almost unprecedentedly expensive, and, indeed, this occasion differed from most others in containing the germ of real danger. For once in a way he had a bad conscience—he felt himself tempted to pick his own pocket. He never saw a commodious writing table, with elbow-room and drawers, and a fair expanse of leather stamped neatly at the edge with gilt, without being freshly reminded of

Mrs. Bundy's dilapidations. There were several such tables in the King's Road—they seemed, indeed, particularly numerous today. Peter Baron glanced at them all through the fronts of the shops, but there was one that detained him in intense contemplation. There was a fine assurance about it which seemed a guarantee of masterpieces ; but when at last he went in and, just to help himself on his way, asked the impossible price, the sum mentioned by the voluble vender mocked at him even more than he had feared. It was far too expensive, as he hinted, and he was on the point of completing his comedy by a pensive retreat when the



LOOKED DIMLY LIKE A MODERN MADONNA.

shopman bespoke his attention for another article of the same general character, which he described as remarkably cheap for what it was. It was an old piece, from a sale in the country, and it had been in stock some time ; but it had got pushed out of sight in one of the upper rooms—they contained such a wilderness of treasures—and happened to have but just come to

light. Peter suffered himself to be conducted into an interminable dusky rear, where he presently found himself bending over one of those square, substantial desks of old mahogany, raised, with the aid of front legs, on a sort of retreating pedestal, which is fitted with small drawers, contracted conveniences, known, immemorably, to the knowing, as davenport. This specimen had visibly seen service, but it had an old-time solidity, and to Peter Baron it unexpectedly appealed.

He would have said in advance that such an article was exactly what he didn't want, but as the shopman pushed up a chair for him, and he sat down with his elbows on the gentle slope of the large, firm lid, he felt that such a basis for literature would be half the battle. He raised the lid and looked lovingly into the deep in-

terior ; he sat ominously silent while his companion remarked that there was nothing skimpy about it. Then, when the man mentioned the ridiculous price (they were literally giving it away) he reflected on the economy of having a literary altar on which one could really kindle a fire. A davenport was a compromise, but what was all life but a compromise? He could beat down the dealer, and at Mrs. Bundy's he had to write on an insincere card table. After he had sat for a minute with his nose in the friendly desk he had a queer impression that it might tell him a secret or two—one of the secrets of form, one of the sacrificial mysteries—though no doubt its career had been literary only in the sense of its helping some old lady to write invitations to dull dinners. There was a strange, faint odor in the receptacle, as if fragrant, hallowed things had once been put away there. When he took his head out of it he said to the shopman : " I don't mind meeting you halfway." He had been told by knowing people that that was the right thing. He felt rather vulgar, but the davenport arrived that evening at Jersey Villas.

II.

" I daresay it will be all right ; he seems quiet now," said the poor lady of the " parlors " a few days later, in reference to their litigious neighbor and the precarious piano. The two lodgers were regularly acquainted now, and the piano had had much to do with it. Just as this instrument served, with the gentleman at No. 4, as a theme for discussion, so between Peter Baron and the lady of the parlors it had become a basis of peculiar agreement, a topic, at any rate, of conversation frequently renewed. Mrs. May was so prepossessing that Peter was sure that even if they had not had the piano he would have found something else to confer with her about. Fortunately, however, they did have it, and he, at least, made the most of it, knowing more now about his new friend, who when, widowed and fatigued, she held her beautiful child in her arms, looked dimly like a modern Madonna. Mrs. Bundy, as a letter of furnished lodgings, was characterized in general by a familiar domestic severity in respect to picturesque young women but she had

every confidence in Mrs. May. She was luminous about her being a lady, and a lady who could bring Mrs. Bundy back to a gratified recognition of one of those manifestations of mind for which she had an independent esteem. She was professional, but Jersey Villas could be proud of a profession that didn't happen to be the wrong one, for they had seen something of that. Mrs. May had a hundred a year (Baron wondered how Mrs. Bundy knew this ; he thought it unlikely Mrs. May had told her), and for the rest she depended on her lovely music. Baron judged that her music, even though lovely, was a frail dependence ; it would hardly help to fill a concert room, and he wondered at first whether she played country dances at children's parties or gave lessons to young ladies who studied above their station.

Very soon, indeed, he was sufficiently enlightened ; it all went fast, for the little boy had been almost as great a help as the piano. Sidney haunted the doorstep of No. 3 ; he was eminently sociable, and had established independent relations with Peter, a frequent feature of which was an adventurous visit upstairs, to picture books criticised for not being all geegees and walking sticks happily more conformable. The young man's window, too, looked out on their acquaintance ; through a starched muslin curtain it kept his neighbor before him, made him almost more aware of her comings and goings than he felt he had a right to be. He was capable of a shyness of curiosity about her, and of dumb little delicacies of consideration. She did give a few lessons ; they were essentially local, and he ended by knowing more or less what she went out for and what she came in from. She had almost no visitors, only a decent old lady or two, and, every day, poor dingy Miss Teagle, who was also ancient, and who came humbly enough to governess the infant of the parlors. Peter Baron's window had always, to his sense, looked out on a good deal of life, and one of the things it had most shown him was that there is nobody so bereft of joy as not to be able to command, for twopence, the services of somebody less joyous. Mrs. May was a struggler (Baron scarcely liked to think of it), but she occupied a pinnacle for Miss Teagle, who had lived on—

and from a noble nursery—into a period of diplomas and humiliation.

Mrs. May sometimes went out, like Baron himself, with manuscripts under her arm, and, still more like Baron, she almost always came back with them. Her vain approaches were to the music sellers; she tried to compose—to produce songs that would make a hit. A successful song was an income, she confided to Peter one of the first times he took Sidney, blasé and drowsy, back to his mother. It was not on one of these occasions, but once when he had come in on no better pretext than that of simply wanting to (she had, after all, virtually invited him), that she mentioned that only one song in a thousand was successful and that the terrible difficulty was in getting the right words. This rightness was just a vulgar "fluke"—there were words that were really clever that were of no use at all. Peter said, laughing, that he supposed any words he should try to produce would be sure to be too clever; yet only three weeks after his first encounter with Mrs. May he sat at his delightful davenport (well aware that he had duties more pressing), trying to string together rhymes idiotic enough to make his neighbor's fortune. He was satisfied of the fineness of her musical gift—it had the touching note. The touching note was in her person as well.

The davenport was delightful, after six months of its tottering predecessor, and such a reënforcement to the young man's style was not impaired by his sense of something lawless in the way it had been gained. He had made the purchase in anticipation of the money he expected from Mr. Locket, but Mr. Locket's liberality was to depend on the ingenuity of his contributor, who now found himself confronted with the consequence of a frivolous optimism. The fruit of his labor presented, as he stared at it with his elbows on his desk, an aspect uncompromising and incorruptible. It seemed to look up at him reproachfully and to say, with its essential finish: "How could you promise anything so base; how could you pass your word to mutilate and dishonor me?" The alterations demanded by Mr. Locket were impossible, the concessions to the platitude of his conception of the public mind were degrading. The public mind!

—as if the public had a mind, or any principle of perception more discoverable than the stare of huddled sheep! Peter Baron felt that it concerned him to determine if he were only not clever enough, or if he were simply not abject enough to rewrite his story. He might, in truth, have had less pride if he had had more skill, and more discretion if he had had more practice. Humility, in the profession of letters, was half of practice and resignation was half of success. Poor Peter actually flushed with pain as he recognized that this was not success, the production of gelid prose which his editor could do nothing with on the one side and he himself could do nothing with on the other. The truth about his luckless tale was now the more bitter from his having managed, for some days, to taste it as sweet.

As he sat there, baffled and sombre, biting his pen and wondering what was meant by the "rewards" of literature, he generally ended by tossing away the composition deflowered by Mr. Locket and trying his hand at the sort of twaddle that Mrs. May might be able to set to music. Success in these experiments wouldn't be a reward of literature, but it might very well become a labor of love. The experiments would be pleasant enough for him if they were pleasant for his mysterious neighbor. That was the way he thought of her now, for he had learned enough about her, little by little, to guess how much there was still to learn. To spend his mornings over cheap rhymes for her was certainly to shirk the immediate question; but there were hours when he judged this question to be altogether too much for him, reflecting that he might as well perish by the sword as by famine. Besides, he did meet it obliquely, when he considered that he shouldn't be an utter failure if he were to produce some songs to which Mrs. May's accompaniments would give a circulation. He had not ventured to show her anything yet, but one morning, at a moment when her little boy was in his room, it seemed to him that, by an inspiration, he had arrived at the happy middle course (it was an art by itself) between sound and sense. If the sense was not confused it was because the sound was familiar.

He had said to the child, to whom he had presented barley sugar (it had no at-

traction for his own lips, yet in these days there was always some of it about), he had confided to the small Sidney that if he would wait a little he should be intrusted with something nice to take down to his parent. Sidney had absorbing occupation and, while Peter copied off the song in a pretty hand, roamed, gurgling and sticky, about the room. In this manner he lurched like a little toper into the rear of the davenport, which stood a little way out from the recess of the window, and, as he was fond of beating time to his intensest joys, began to bang on the surface of it with a paper knife which at that spot had chanced to fall upon the floor. At the moment Sidney committed this violence his kind friend had happened to raise the lid of the desk and, with his head beneath it, was rummaging among a mass of papers for a proper envelope. "I say, I say, my boy!" he exclaimed, solicitous for the good looks of his most cherished possession. Sidney paused an instant; then, while Peter still hunted for the envelope, he administered another, and this time a distinctly disobedient, rap. Peter heard it from within and was struck with its oddity of sound—so much so that, leaving the child for a moment under a demoralizing impression of impunity, he waited with quick curiosity for a repetition of the stroke. It came, of course, immediately, and then the young man, who had at the same instant found his envelope and ejaculated "Hallo, this thing has a false back!" jumped up and secured his visitor, whom with his left arm he held in durance on his knee while with his free hand he addressed the missive to Mrs. May.

As Sidney was fond of errands he was easily got rid of, and after he had gone Baron stood a moment at the window chinking pennies and keys in pockets and wondering if the charming composer would think his song as good, or in other words as bad, as he thought it. His eyes as he turned away fell on the wooden back of the davenport, where, to his regret, the traces of Sidney's assault were visible in three or four ugly scratches. "Confound the little brute!" he exclaimed, feeling as if an altar had been desecrated. He was reminded, however, of the observation this outrage had led him to make, and, for further assurance, he knocked on the wood

with his knuckle. It sounded from that position commonplace enough, but his suspicion was strongly confirmed when, again standing beside the desk, he put his head beneath the lifted lid and gave ear while with an extended arm he tapped sharply in the same place. The back was distinctly hollow; there was a space between the inner and the outer pieces (he could measure it) so wide that he was a fool not to have noticed it before. The depth of the receptacle from front to rear was so great that it could sacrifice a certain quantity of room without detection. The sacrifice could, of course, only be for a purpose, and the purpose could only be to supply a secret compartment. Peter Baron was still boy enough to be thrilled by the idea of such a feature, the more so as every indication of it had been cleverly concealed. The people at the shop had never noticed it, else they would have called his attention to it as an enhancement of value. His legendary lore instructed him that where there was a hiding place there was always a hidden spring, and he pried and pressed and fumbled in an eager search for the sensitive spot. The article was really a wonder of neat construction; everything fitted with a closeness that completely saved appearances.

It took Baron some minutes to pursue his inquiry, during which he reflected that the people of the shop were not such fools after all. They had admitted, moreover, that they had accidentally neglected this refined creation—it had been overlooked in the multiplicity of their treasures. He now recalled that the man had wanted to polish it up before sending it home, and that, satisfied himself with its honorable appearance and averse in general to shiny furniture, he had in his impatience declined to wait for such an operation, so that the object had left the place for Jersey Villas, carrying, presumably, its secret with it, two or three hours after his visit. This secret it seemed, indeed, capable of keeping; there was an absurdity in being baffled, but Peter couldn't find the spring. He thumped and sounded, he listened and measured again; he inspected every joint and crevice, with the effect of becoming surer still of the existence of a cachette and of making up his mind that his davenport was a rarity. Not only

was there a compartment between the two backs, but there was distinctly something in the compartment! Perhaps it was a lost manuscript—a nice, safe, old-fashioned story that Mr. Locket wouldn't object to. Peter returned to the charge, for it had occurred to him that he had perhaps not sufficiently visited the small drawers, of which, in two vertical rows, there were six in number of different sizes, inserted sideways into that portion of the structure which formed part of the support of the desk. He took them out again and examined more minutely the condition of their sockets, with the happy result of discovering at last, in the place into which the third on the left-hand row was fitted, a small sliding panel. Behind the panel was a spring, like a flat button, which yielded with a click when he pressed it, and which instantly produced a loosening of one of the pieces of the shelf forming the highest part of the davenport—pieces adjusted to each other with the most deceptive closeness.

This particular piece proved to be, in its turn, a sliding panel, which, when pushed, revealed the existence of a smaller receptacle, a narrow, oblong box, in the false back. Its capacity was limited, but if it couldn't hold many things it might hold precious ones. Baron, in presence of the ingenuity with which it had been dissimulated, immediately felt that, but for the odd chance of little Sidney May's having tapped on the outside at the moment he himself happened to have his head in the desk, he might have remained for years without suspicion of it. This, apparently, would have been a loss, for he had been right in guessing that the cachette was not empty. It contained objects which, whether precious or not, had at any rate been worth somebody's hiding. These objects were a collection of small flat parcels, of the shape of packets of letters, wrapped in white paper and neatly sealed. The seals, mechanically figured, bore the impress

neither of arms nor of initials; the paper looked old—it had turned faintly fallow; the packets might have been there for ages. Baron counted them—there were nine in all, of different sizes; he turned them over and over, felt them curiously, and sniffed in their vague, musty smell, which affected him with melancholy, like some smothered human accent. The little bundles were neither named nor numbered—there was not a word of writing on any of the covers; but they plainly contained old letters, sorted and matched ac-



"I SAY! I SAY, MY BOY!"

cording to dates or to authorship. They told some old, dead story—they were the ashes of fires burned out.

As Peter Baron held his discoveries successively in his hands he became conscious of a queer emotion which was not altogether elation and yet was still less pure pain. He had made a find, but it somehow added to his responsibility; he was in the presence of something interesting, but (in a manner he couldn't have defined) this circumstance suddenly constituted a danger. It was the perception of the danger, for instance, which caused to remain in abeyance any impulse he might have felt to break one of the seals.

He looked at them all narrowly, but he was careful not to loosen them, and he wondered uncomfortably whether the contents of the secret compartment would be held in equity to be the property of the people in the King's Road. He had given money for the davenport, but had he given money for these lurking papers? He paid, by a growing consciousness that a nameless chill had stolen into the air, the penalty, which he had often, indeed, paid before, of being made of sensitive stuff. It was as if an occasion had insidiously risen for a sacrifice—a sacrifice for the sake of a fine superstition, something like honor or kindness or justice, something, indeed, perhaps even finer still—a difficult deciphering of duty, an impossible tantalizing wisdom. Standing there before his questionable treasure and losing himself, for the moment, in the sense of a dawning complication, he was startled by a light, quick tap at the door of his sitting room. Instinctively, before answering, he listened an instant—he was in the attitude of a miser surprised while counting his hoard. Then he answered "One moment, please!" and slipped the little heap of packets into the biggest of the drawers of the davenport, which happened to be open. The aperture of the false back was still gaping, and he had not time to work back the spring. He hastily laid a big book over the place, and then went and opened his door.

It offered him a sight none the less agreeable for being unexpected—the graceful and agitated figure of Mrs. May. Her agitation was so visible that he thought at first that something dreadful had happened to her child—that she had rushed up to ask for help, to beg him to go for the doctor. Then he perceived that it was probably connected with the desperate verses he had transmitted to her a quarter of an hour before; for she had his open manuscript in one hand and was nervously pulling it about with the other. She looked frightened and pretty, and if, in invading the privacy of a fellow lodger, she had been guilty of a departure from rigid custom, she was at least conscious of the enormity of the step and incapable of treating it with levity. The levity was for Peter Baron, who endeavored, however, to clothe his familiarity with respect, pushing forward

the seat of honor and repeating that he rejoiced in such a visit. The visitor came in, leaving the door ajar, and after a minute, during which, to help her, he charged her with the purpose of telling him that he ought to be ashamed to send her down such rubbish, she recovered herself sufficiently to stammer out that his song was exactly what she had been looking for and that, after reading it, she had been seized with an extraordinary, irresistible impulse—that of thanking him for it in person and without delay.

"It was the impulse of a kind nature," he said, "and I can't tell you what pleasure you give me."

She declined to sit down, and evidently wished to appear to have come but for a few seconds. She looked about her confusedly, at the place in which she found herself, and when her eyes met his own they struck him as anxious and appealing. She was evidently not thinking of his song, though she said three or four times over that it was precisely the right thing. "Well, I only wanted you to know, and now I must go," she added; but, on his hearthrug, she lingered with such an odd helplessness that he felt almost sorry for her.

"Perhaps I can improve it if you find it doesn't go," said Baron. "I'm so delighted to do anything for you I can."

"There may be a word or two that might be changed," she answered, rather absently. "I shall have to think it over, to live with it a little. But I like it, and that's all I wanted to say."

"Charming of you. I'm not a bit busy," said Baron.

Again she looked at him with a troubled intensity, and then, suddenly, she demanded: "Is there anything the matter with you?"

"The matter with me?"

"I mean like being ill or worried. I wondered if there might be; I had a sudden fancy; and that, I think, is really why I came up."

"There isn't, indeed; I'm all right. But your sudden fancies are inspirations."

"It's absurd. You must excuse me. Good-by!" said Mrs. May.

"What are the words you want changed?" Baron asked.

"I don't want any—if you're all right. Good-by," his visitor repeated, fixing her

eyes an instant on an object on his desk that had caught them. His own glanced in the same direction and he saw that in his hurry to shuffle away the packets found in the davenport he had left out one of them, which lay with its seals exposed. For an instant he felt found out, as if he had been concerned in something to be ashamed of, and it was only his quick second thought that told him that the incident of which the packet was a consequence was no affair of Mrs. May's. Her conscious eyes came back to his as if they were sounding them, and suddenly this instinct of keeping his discovery to himself was succeeded by a really startled cognition that, with the rarest alertness, she had guessed something, and that her guess (it seemed almost supernatural) had been her real motive. Some secret sympathy had made her vibrate—had touched her with the knowledge that he had brought something to light. After an instant he saw that she divined, further, the very reflection that he was then making, and this gave him a desire—a grateful, happy desire—to seem to have nothing to conceal. For herself, it determined her still more to put an end to her momentary visit. But before she had passed to the door he exclaimed :

"All right? How can a fellow be anything else who has just had such a find?"

She paused at this, still looking earnest, and asking : "What have you found?"

"Some ancient family papers, in a secret compartment of my writing table." And he took up the packet he had left out, holding it before her eyes.

"A lot of other things like that."

"What are they?" asked Mrs. May.

"I haven't the least idea. They're sealed."

"You haven't broken the seals?" She had come further back.

"I haven't had time; it only happened ten minutes ago."

"I knew it," said Mrs. May, more gayly now.

"What did you know?"

"That you were in some predicament."

"You're extraordinary. I never heard of anything so miraculous; down two flights of stairs."

"Are you in a quandary?" the visitor asked.

"Yes, about giving them back." Peter Baron stood smiling at her and rapping his packet on the palm of his hand.

"What do you advise?"

She herself smiled now, with her eyes on the sealed parcel. "Back to whom?"

"The man of whom I bought the table."



"NONE THE LESS AGREEABLE FOR BEING UNEXPECTED."

"Ah, then, they're not from your family!"

"No, indeed, the piece of furniture in which they were hidden is not an ancestral possession. I bought it at second hand—you see it's old—the other day in the King's Road. Obviously the man who sold it to me sold me more than he meant; he had no idea (from his own point of view it was stupid of him) that there was a secret compartment or that mysterious documents were buried there. Ought I to go and tell him? It's rather a nice question."

"Are the papers of value?" Mrs. May inquired.

"I haven't the least idea. But I can ascertain by breaking a seal."

"Don't!" said Mrs. May, with much expression. She looked grave again.

"It's rather tantalizing—it's a bit of a problem," Baron went on, turning his packet over.

Mrs. May hesitated. "Will you show me what you have in your hand?"

He gave her the packet and she looked at and held it for an instant to her nose. "It has a queer, charming old fragrance," he said.

"Charming? It's horrid." She handed him back the packet, saying again, more emphatically: "Don't!"

"Don't break a seal?"

"Don't give back the papers."

"Is it honest to keep them?"

"Certainly. They're yours as much as the people's of the shop. They were in the secret compartment when the table came to the shop, and the people had every opportunity to find them out. They didn't—therefore let them take the consequences."

Peter Baron reflected, amused at her intensity. She was pale, with eyes almost ardent. "The table had been in the place for years."

"That proves the things haven't been missed."

"Let me show you how they were hidden," he rejoined; and he exhibited the ingenious recess and the working of the curious spring. She was greatly interested, she grew excited and became familiar; she appealed to him again not to do anything so foolish as to give up the papers, the rest of which, in their little blank, impenetrable covers, he placed in a row before her. "They might be traced—their history, their ownership," he argued; to which she replied that this was exactly why he ought to be quiet. He declared that women had not the smallest sense of honor, and she retorted that at any rate they had other perceptions more delicate than those of men. He admitted that the papers might be rubbish, and she remarked that nothing was more probable; yet when he offered to settle the point off-hand she caught him by the wrist, acknowledging that, absurd as it was, she was nervous. Finally she put the whole thing on the

ground of his doing her a favor. She asked him to retain the papers, to be silent about them, simply because it would please her. That was reason enough. Baron's acquaintance, his agreeable relations with her, advanced many steps in the treatment of this question; an element of friendly candor made its way into their discussion of it.

"I can't make out why it matters to you, one way or the other, nor why you should think it's worth talking about," the young man declared.

"Neither can I. It's just a whim."

"Certainly, if it will give you any pleasure, I'll say nothing at the shop."

"That's charming of you, and I'm very grateful. I see now that that was why the spirit moved me to come up—to save them," Mrs. May went on. She added, moving away, that now she had saved them she must really go.

"To save them for what, if I mayn't break the seals?" Baron asked.

"I don't know—for a generous sacrifice."

"Why should it be generous? What's at stake?" Peter demanded, leaning against the doorpost as she stood on the landing.

"I don't know what, but I feel as if something or other were in peril. Burn them up!" she exclaimed, with shining eyes.

"Ah, you ask too much—I'm so curious about them!"

"Well, I won't ask more than I ought, and I'm much obliged to you for your promise to be quiet. I trust to your discretion. Good-by."

"You ought to reward my discretion," said Baron, coming out to the landing.

She had partly descended the staircase, and she stopped, leaning against the baluster and smiling up at him. "Surely you've had your reward in the honor of my visit."

"That's delightful as far as it goes. But what will you do for me if I burn the papers?"

Mrs. May considered a moment. "Burn them first and you'll see!"

On this she went rapidly downstairs, and Baron, to whom the answer appeared inadequate, and the proposition indeed, in that form, grossly unfair, returned to his room. The vivacity of her interest in a

question in which she had, discoverably, nothing at stake, mystified, amused, and, in addition, irresistibly charmed him. She was delicate, imaginative, inflammable, quick to feel and to act. He didn't complain of it, it was the way he liked women to be; but he was not impelled for the hour to commit the sealed packets to the flames. He put them back into the secret compartment, and after that he went out. He felt restless and excited; another day was lost for work—the dreadful job to be performed for Mr. Locket was still further off.

III.

Ten days after Mrs. May's visit, he paid, by appointment, another call on the editor of the *Promiscuous*. He found him in the little wainscoted Chelsea house, which had, to Peter's sense, the smoky brownness of an old pipe bowl, surrounded with all the emblems of his office—a litter of papers, a hedge of encyclopædias, a photographic gallery of popular contributors—and he promised at first to consume very few of the moments for which so many claims competed. It was Mr. Locket himself, however, who presently made the interview spacious, gave it air after discovering that poor Baron had come to tell him something more interesting than that he couldn't, after all, patch up his tale. Peter had begun with this, had intimated respectfully that it was a case in which both practice and principle rebelled, and then, perceiving how little Mr. Locket was affected by his audacity, had felt weak and slightly silly, left with his heroism on his hands. He had armed himself for a struggle, but the *Promiscuous* didn't even protest, and there would have been nothing for him but to go away with the prospect of never coming again had he not chanced to say abruptly, irrelevantly, as he got up from his chair:

"Do you happen to be at all interested in Sir Dominick Ferrand?"

Mr. Locket, who had also got up, looked over his glasses. "The late Sir Dominick?"

"The only one; you know the family's extinct."

Mr. Locket shot his young friend another sharp glance, a silent retort to the glibness of this information. "Very

extinct indeed. I'm afraid the subject to-day would scarcely be regarded as an attractive one."

"Are you very sure?" Baron asked.

Mr. Locket leaned forward a little, with his finger-tips on his table, in the attitude of giving permission to retire. "I might consider the question in a special connection." He was silent a minute, in a way that relegated poor Peter to the general; then, meeting the young man's eyes again, he asked: "Are you—a—thinking of proposing an article upon him?"

"Not exactly proposing it—because I don't yet quite see my way; but the idea rather appeals to me."

Mr. Locket emitted the safe assertion that this eminent statesman had been a striking figure in his day; then he added: "Have you been studying him?"

"I've been dipping into him."

"I'm afraid he's scarcely a question of the hour," said Mr. Locket, shuffling papers together.

"I think I could make him one," Peter Baron rejoined.

Mr. Locket stared again; he was unable to repress an unattenuated "You?"

"I have some new material," said the young man, coloring a little. "That often freshens up an old story."

"It buries it sometimes. It's often only another tombstone."

"That depends upon what it is. However," Peter added, "the documents I speak of would be a crushing monument."

Mr. Locket, hesitating, shot another glance under his glasses. "Do you allude to—a—revelations?"

"Very curious ones."

Mr. Locket, still on his feet, had kept his body at the bowing angle; it was therefore easy for him after an instant to bend a little farther and to sink into his chair with a movement of his hand toward the seat Baron had occupied. Baron resumed possession of this convenience, and the conversation took a fresh start on a basis which such an extension of privilege could render but little less humiliating to our young man. He had matured no plan of confiding his secret to Mr. Locket, and he had really come out to make him, conscientiously, that other announcement as to which it appeared that so much artistic agitation had been wasted. He had, indeed, during the past days—

days of painful indecision—appealed in imagination to the editor of the *Promiscuous*, as he had appealed to other sources of comfort ; but his scruples turned their face upon him from high quarters as well as from low, and though he had by no means made up his mind today not to mention his strange knowledge to Mr. Locket, he had left equally to the impulse of the moment the question of how he should introduce the subject. He was, in fact, too nervous to decide ; he only felt that he needed, for his peace of mind, to communicate his discovery. He wanted an opinion, the impression of somebody else, and even in this intensely professional presence, five minutes after he had begun to tell his queer story he felt relieved of half his burden. His story was very queer ; he could take the measure of that himself as he spoke ; but wouldn't this very circumstance qualify it for the *Promiscuous* ?

"Of course the letters may be forgeries," said Mr. Locket at last.

"I've no doubt that's what some people will say."

"Have they been seen by any expert?"

"No, indeed ; they've been seen by nobody."

"Have you got any of them with you?"

"No ; I felt nervous about bringing them out."

"That's a pity. I should have liked the testimony of my eyes."

"You may have it if you'll come to my rooms. If you don't care to do that without a further guarantee, I'll copy you out some passages."

"Select a few of the worst!" Mr. Locket laughed. Over Baron's invidious information he had become quite human and genial. But he added in a moment, more dryly : "You know they ought to be seen by an expert."

"That's exactly what I dread," said Peter.

"They'll be worth nothing to me if they're not."

Peter communed with his innermost spirit. "How much will they be worth to me if they are?"

Mr. Locket turned in his study chair. "I should require to look at them before answering that question."

"I've been to the British museum—

there are many of his letters there. I've obtained permission to see them, and I've compared everything carefully. I repudiate the possibility of forgery. No sign of genuineness is wanting ; there are details, down to the very postmarks, that no forger could have invented. Besides, whose interest could it conceivably have been ? A labor of unspeakable difficulty, and all for what advantage ? There are so many letters, too—twenty-seven in all."

"Lord, what an ass !" Mr. Locket exclaimed.

"It will be one of the strangest post-mortem revelations of which history preserves the record."

Mr. Locket, grave now, worried with a paper knife the crevice of a drawer. "It's very odd. But to be worth anything, such documents should be subjected to a searching criticism—I mean of the historical kind."

"Certainly ; that would be the task of the writer introducing them to the public."

Again Mr. Locket considered ; then, with a smile, he looked up. "You had better give up original composition and take to buying old furniture."

"Do you mean because it will pay better?"

"For you, I should think, original composition couldn't pay worse. The creative faculty's so rare."

"I do feel tempted to turn my attention to real heroes," Peter replied.

"I'm bound to declare that Sir Dominick Ferrand was never one of mine. Flashy, crafty, second rate—that's how I've always read him. It was never a secret, moreover, that his private life had its weak spots. He was a mere flash in the pan."

"He speaks to the people of this country," said Baron.

"He did ; but his voice—the voice, I mean, of his prestige—is scarcely audible now."

"They're still proud of some of the things he did at the Foreign Office—the famous 'exchange' with Spain, in the Mediterranean, which took Europe so by surprise and by which she felt injured, especially when it became apparent how much we had the best of the bargain. Then the sudden, unexpected show of force by which he imposed on the United States our interpretation of that tiresome

treaty. I could never make out what it was about. These were both matters that no one cared a straw about, but he made everyone care; the nation rose to the way he played his trumps—it was uncommon. He was one of the few men we've had, in our period, who took Europe, or took America, by surprise, made them jump a bit; and the country liked his doing it—it was a pleasant change. The rest of the world considered that they knew, in any case, exactly what we would do, which was usually nothing at all. Say what you like, he's still a high name; partly also, no doubt, on account of other things—his early success and early death, his political 'cheek' and wit; his very appearance—he certainly was handsome—and the possibilities (of future personal supremacy) which it was the fashion at the time, which it's the fashion still, to say had passed away with him. He had been twice at the Foreign Office; that alone was remarkable for a man dying at forty-four. What, therefore, will the country think when it learns he was venal?"

Peter Baron himself was not angry with Sir Dominick Ferrand, who had simply become to him (he had been "reading up" feverishly for a week) a very curious subject of psychological study; but he could easily put himself in the place of that portion of the public whose memory was long enough for their patriotism to receive a shock. It was some time, fortunately, since the conduct of public affairs had wanted for men of disinterested ability, but the extraordinary documents concealed (of all places in the world—it was as fantastic as a nightmare) in a "bargain" picked up at second-hand by an obscure scribbler, would be a calculable

blow to the retrospective mind. Baron saw vividly that if these relics should be made public, the scandal, the horror, the chatter would be immense. Immense would be also the contribution to truth, the rectification of history. He had felt for several days (and it was exactly what had made him so nervous) as if he held in his hand the key to public attention.

"There are too many things to explain," Mr. Locket went on, "and the singular provenance of your papers would count almost overwhelmingly against



"MR. LOCKET HAD KEPT HIS BODY AT THE BOWING ANGLE."

them even if the other objections were met. There would be a perfect, and probably a very complicated, pedigree to trace. How did they get into your davenport, as you call it, and how long had they been there? What hands secreted them? what hands had, so incredibly, clung to them and preserved them? Who are the persons mentioned in them? who are the correspondents, the parties to the nefarious transactions? You say the transactions appear to be of two distinct kinds—some of them connected with public business, and others involving obscure personal relations."

"They all have this in common," said Peter Baron, "that they constitute evidence of uneasiness, in some instances of painful alarm, on the writer's part, in relation to exposure—the exposure in the one case, as I gather, of the fact that he had availed himself of official opportunities to promote enterprises (public works and that sort of thing) in which he had a pecuniary stake. The dread of the light in the other connection is evidently different, and these letters are the earliest in date. They are addressed to a woman, from whom he had evidently received money."

Mr. Locket wiped his glasses. "What woman?"

"I haven't the least idea. There are lots of questions I can't answer, of course; lots of identities I can't establish; lots of gaps I can't fill. But as to two points I'm clear, and they are the essential ones. In the first place the papers in my possession are genuine; in the second place they're compromising."

With this Peter Baron rose again, rather vexed with himself for having been led on to advertise his treasure (it was his interlocutor's perfectly natural scepticism that produced this effect), for he felt that he was putting himself in a false position. He detected in Mr. Locket's studied detachment the fermentation of impulses from which, unsuccessful as he was, he himself prayed to be delivered.

Mr. Locket remained seated; he watched Baron go across the room for his hat and umbrella. "Of course, the question would come up of whose property today such documents would legally be. There are heirs, descendants, executors to consider."

"In some degree, perhaps; but I've gone into that a little. Sir Dominick Ferrand had no children, and he left no brothers and no sisters. His wife survived him, but she died ten years ago. He can have had no heirs and no executors to speak of, for he left no property."

"That's to his honor and against your theory," said Mr. Locket.

"I have no theory. He left a largeish mass of debt," Peter Baron added. At this Mr. Locket got up, while his visitor

pursued: "So far as I can ascertain, though, of course, my inquiries have had to be very rapid and superficial, there is no one now living, directly or indirectly related to the personage in question, who would be likely to suffer from any steps in the direction of publicity. It happens to be a rare instance of a life that had, as it were, no loose ends. At least, there are none perceptible at present."

"I see, I see," said Mr. Locket. "But I don't think I should care much for your article."

"What article?"

"The one you seem to wish to write, embodying this new matter."

"Oh, I don't wish to write it!" Peter exclaimed. And then he bade his host good-by.

"Good-by," said Mr. Locket. "Mind you, I don't say that I think there's nothing in it."

"You would think there was something in it if you were to see my documents."

"I should like to see the secret compartment," the caustic editor rejoined. "Copy me out some extracts."

"To what end, if there's no question of their being of use to you?"

"I don't say that—I might like the letters themselves."

"Themselves?"

"Not as the basis of a paper, but just to publish—for a sensation."

"They'd sell your number!" Baron laughed.

"I daresay I should like to look at them," Mr. Locket conceded after a moment. "When should I find you at home?"

"Don't come," said the young man. "I make you no offer."

"I might make you one," the editor smiled.

"Don't trouble yourself; I shall probably destroy them." With this Peter Baron took his departure, waiting, however, just afterwards, in the street near the house a few minutes, as if he had been looking out for a stray hansom, to which he would not have signalled had it appeared. He thought Mr. Locket might hurry after him, but Mr. Locket seemed to have other things to do, and Peter Baron returned on foot to Jersey Villas.

(Concluded in the August issue.)

JERSEY VILLAS.

BY HENRY JAMES.

IV.

ON the evening of the day of Peter Baron's second visit to Mr. Locket he had some interesting conversation with Mrs. Bundy, for whose shrewd and philosophic view of life he had more than once expressed, even to the good woman herself, a considerable relish. The situation at Jersey Villas (Mrs. May had suddenly flown off to Dover) was such as to create in him a desire for moral support, and there was a kind of domestic determination in Mrs. Bundy which seemed, in general, to advertise it. He had asked for her on coming in, but had been told she was absent for the hour; upon which he had addressed himself mechanically to the task of doing up his dishonored manuscript—the ingenious fiction about which Mr. Locket had been so stupid—for further adventures and not improbable defeats. He passed a restless, ineffective afternoon, asking himself if his genius were a horrid delusion, looking out of his window for something that didn't happen, something that seemed now to be the advent of a persuasive Mr. Locket and now the re-

turn, from an absence more disappointing even than Mrs. Bundy's, of his interesting neighbor of the parlors. He was so nervous and so depressed that he was unable even to fix his mind on the composi-

tion of the note with which, on its next sad pilgrimage, it was necessary that his manuscript should be accompanied. He was too nervous to eat, and he forgot even to dine; he forgot to light his candles, he let his fire go out, and it was in the melancholy chill of the late dusk that Mrs. Bundy, arriving at last with his lamp, found him extended moodily upon his sofa. She had been informed that he wished to speak to her, and, as she placed on the malodorous luminary an oily shade of green pasteboard, she expressed the friendly hope that there was nothing wrong with his 'ealth.



"HE PASSED A RESTLESS AFTERNOON."

The young man rose from his couch, pulling himself together sufficiently to reply that his health was well enough, but that his spirits were down in his boots. He had a strong disposition to "draw" his landlady on the subject of Mrs. May, as well as a vivid conviction that it was a theme on which Mrs. Bundy would require little pressure to tell him

even more than she knew. At the same time he hated to appear to pry into the secrets of his absent friend; to discuss her with their bustling hostess resembled, too much for his taste, a gossip with a tattling servant about an unconscious employer. He left out of account, however, Mrs. Bundy's knowledge of the human heart, for it was this fine principle that broke down the barriers after he had reflected, reassuringly, that it was not meddling with Mrs. May's affairs to try and find out if she struck such an observer as happy. Crudely, abruptly, even a little blushing, he put the direct question to Mrs. Bundy, and this led, tolerably straight, to another question, which, on his spirit, sat equally heavy (they were indeed but different phases of the same), and which the good woman answered, with expression, when she ejaculated: "Think it a liberty for you to run down for a few hours? If she do, my dear sir, just send her to me to talk to!" As regards happiness, indeed, she warned Baron against imposing too high a standard on a young thing who had been through so much, and before he knew it he found himself, without the responsibility of choice, in submissive receipt of Mrs. Bundy's version of this experience. It was an interesting picture, though it had its infirmities, one of them congenital and consisting of the fact that it had sprung, essentially, from the virginal brain of Miss Teagle. Amplified, edited, embellished by the richer genius of Mrs. Bundy, who had incorporated with it, and now liberally exhibited, copious interleavings of Miss Teagle's own romance, it gave Peter Baron much food for meditation, at the same time that it only half relieved his curiosity about the causes of the charming woman's underlying strangeness. He sounded this note experimentally in Mrs. Bundy's ear, but it was easy to see that it didn't reverberate in her fancy. She had no idea of the picture it would have been natural for him to desire that Mrs. May should present to him, and she was therefore unable to estimate the points in respect to which his actual impression was irritating. She had indeed no adequate conception of the intellectual requirements of a young man in love. She couldn't tell him why their faultless friend was so isolated, so unre-

lated, so nervously, shrinkingly proud. On the other hand she could tell him (he knew it already) that she had passed many years of her life in the acquisition of accomplishments, at a seat of learning no less remote than Boulogne, and that Miss Teagle had been intimately acquainted with the late Mr. Everard May, who was a "most rising" young man in the city, not making any year less than his clear twelve hundred. "Now that he isn't there to make them, his mourning widow can't live as she had then, can she?" Mrs. Bundy asked.

Baron was not prepared to say that she could, but he thought of another way she might live as he sat, the next day, in the train which rattled him down to Dover. The place, as he approached it, seemed bright and breezy to him; his roamings had been neither far enough nor frequent enough to make the cockneyfied coast insipid. Mrs. Bundy, of course, had given him the address he needed, and, on emerging from the station, he was on the point of asking what direction he should take. His attention, however, at this moment was drawn away by the bustle of the departing boat. He had been long enough shut up in London to be conscious of refreshment in the mere act of turning his face to Paris. He wandered off to the pier in company with happier tourists, and, leaning on a rail, watched enviously the preparation, the agitation of foreign travel. It was for some minutes a foretaste of adventure; but, ah, when was he to have the very draught? He turned away as he dropped this silent inquiry and, in doing so, perceived that in another part of the pier two ladies and a little boy were gathered with something of the same wistfulness. The little boy, indeed, happened to look round for a moment, upon which, with the keenness of the predatory age, he recognized in our young man a source of pleasures from which he lately had been weaned. He bounded forward with irrepressible cries of "Geegee!" and Peter lifted him aloft for an embrace. On putting him down the pilgrim from Jersey Villas stood confronted with a sensibly severe Miss Teagle, who had followed her little charge. "What's the matter with the old woman?" he asked himself as he offered her a hand, which she treated as the merest detail. Whatever it was, it was

(and very properly, on the part of a loyal *suivante*) the same complaint as that of her employer, to whom—at a distance, for Mrs. May had not advanced an inch—he raised his hat as she stood looking at him from a face that he imagined rather white. Mrs. May's response to this salutation was to shift her position in such a manner as to appear again absorbed in the Calais boat. Peter Baron, however, kept hold of the child, whom Miss Teagle artfully endeavored to wrest from him—a policy in which he was aided by Sidney's own rough but instinctive loyalty; and he was thankful for the happy effect of being dragged by his jubilant friend in the very direction in which he had tended for so many hours. Mrs. May turned once more as he came near, and then, from the sweet, strained smile with which she asked him if he were on his way to France, he saw that if she had been angry at his having followed her, she had quickly got over it.

"No, I'm not crossing; but it came over me that you might be, and that's why I hurried down—to catch you before you were off."

"Oh, we can't go—more's the pity; but why, if we could," Mrs. May inquired, "should you wish to prevent it?"

"Because I've something to ask you first, something that may take some time." He saw now that her embarrassment had really not been resentful; it had been nervous, tremulous, as the emotion of an unexpected pleasure might have been. "That's really why I determined last night, without asking your leave first, to pay you this little visit—that and the intense desire for another bout of horse-play with Sidney. Oh, I've come to see you," Peter Baron went on, "and I won't make any secret of the fact that I expect you to resign yourself gracefully to the infliction and to give me all your time. The day's lovely, and I'm ready to declare that the place is as good as the day. Let me drink deep of these things, drain the cup like a man who hasn't been out of London for months and months. Let me walk with you and talk with you and lunch with you—I go back this afternoon. Give me all your hours, in short, so that they may live in my memory as one of the sweetest occasions of my life."

The emission of steam from the French packet made such an uproar that Baron

could breathe his passion into the young woman's ear without scandalizing the spectators; and the charm which little by little it drew down upon his fleeting visit proved indeed to be the collective influence of the conditions he had put into words. "What is it you wish to ask me?" Mrs. May demanded, as they stood there together; to which he replied that he would tell her all about it if she would send Miss Teagle off with Sidney. Miss Teagle, who was always anticipating her cue, had already begun ostentatiously to gaze at the distant shores of France, and was easily enough induced to take an earlier start home and to rise to the responsibility of stopping on her way to lay in something extra. She had, however, to retire without Sidney, who clung to his recovered prey, so that the rest of the episode was seasoned for Baron by the sense of the importunate grasp of the child's little plump, cool hand. The friends wandered together, with this appendage, with a sufficiently conjugal air, hanging, wistfully, first, over the prolonged spectacle of the Calais boat, till they could look after it, as it moved rumbling away, in a spell of silence which seemed to confess—especially when, a moment later, their eyes met—that it produced the same fond fancy in each. The presence of the boy, moreover, was no hindrance to their talking in a manner that they pretended to consider frank. Peter Baron very soon told his companion what it was he had taken a journey to ask her, and he had time, afterwards, to get over his discomfiture at her appearance of having fancied it might have been something greater. She seemed disappointed (but she was forgiving) on learning from him that he had only wished to know if she judged inexorably his not having complied with her request to respect certain seals.

"How inexorably do you suspect me of having judged it?" she asked.

"Why, to the extent of leaving the house the next moment."

They were still lingering on the great granite pier when he touched on this matter, and she sat down at the end, while the breeze, warmed by the sunshine, ruffled the purple sea. She colored a little and looked troubled, and after an instant she repeated interrogatively: "The next moment?"

"As soon as I had told you what I had done. I was scrupulous about this, you will remember; I went straight downstairs to confess to you. You turned away from me, saying nothing; I couldn't imagine—as, I vow, I can't imagine now—why such a matter should appear so closely to touch you. I went out on some business and when I returned you had quitted the house. It had all the look of my having offended you, of your wishing to get away from me. You didn't even give me time to tell you how it was that, in spite of your advice, I determined to see for myself what my discovery represented. You must do me justice and hear what determined me."

Mrs. May got up from her seat and asked him, as a particular favor, not to allude again to his discovery. It was no concern of hers at all, and she had no warrant for prying into his secrets. She was very sorry to have been so absurd, for a moment, as to appear to do so, and she humbly begged his pardon for her meddling. Saying this, she walked on, with a charming color in her cheek, while he laughed out, though he was really bewildered, at the unfailing inconsequence of women. Fortunately the incident didn't spoil the hour, in which there were other sources of satisfaction, and they took their course to her lodgings with such pleasant little pauses and excursions by the way as permitted her to show him the objects of interest at Dover. She let him stop at a wine merchant's and buy a bottle for luncheon, of which, in its order, they partook, together with a pudding, invented by Miss Teagle, which, as they hypocritically swallowed it, made them look at each other in an intimacy of indulgence. They came out again and, while Sidney grubbed in the gravel of the shore, sat selfishly on the Parade, to the disappointment of Miss Teagle, who had fixed her hopes on a fly and a ladylike visit to the castle. Baron had his eye on his watch—he had to think of his train and the dismal return and many other melancholy things; but the sea in the afternoon light was a more appealing picture; the wind had gone down, the Channel was crowded, the sails of the ships were white in the colored distance. The young man had asked his companion (he had asked her before) when she was to

come back to Jersey Villas, and she had said that she should probably stay at Dover another week. It was dreadfully expensive, but it was doing the child all the good in the world, and if Miss Teagle could go up for some things she should probably be able to manage an extension. Earlier in the day she had said that she, perhaps, wouldn't return to Jersey Villas at all, or only return to wind up her connection with Mrs. Bundy. At another moment she had spoken of an early date, an immediate reoccupation of the wonderful parlors. Baron saw that she had no plan, no real reasons, that she was vague and, in secret, worried and nervous, waiting for something that didn't depend on herself. A silence of several minutes had fallen upon them while they watched the shining sails; to which Mrs. May put an end by exclaiming abruptly, but without completing her sentence: "Oh, if you had come to tell me you had destroyed them——"

"Those terrible papers? I like the way you talk about 'destroying!' You don't even know what they are."

"I don't want to know; they put me into a state."

"What sort of a state?"

"I don't know; they haunt me."

"They haunted me; that was why, early one morning, suddenly, I couldn't keep my hands off them. I had told you I wouldn't touch them. I had deferred to your caprice, your superstition (what is it?), but at last they got the better of me. I had lain awake all night threshing about, itching with curiosity. It made me ill; my own nerves (as it were) were irritated, my capacity to work was gone. It had come over me in the small hours in the shape of an obsession, a fixed idea that there was nothing in the ridiculous relics and that my exaggerated scruples were making a fool of me. It was ten to one they were rubbish, they were blank, they were empty; that they had been even a practical joke on the part of some weak-minded gentleman of leisure, a former possessor of the confounded davenport. The longer I hovered about them with such precautions the longer I was taken in, and the sooner I exposed their insignificance the sooner I should get back to my usual occupations. This conviction made my hand so uncontrolla-

ble that that morning before breakfast I broke one of the seals. It took me but a few minutes to perceive that the contents were not rubbish; the little bundle contained old letters—very curious old letters."

"I know—I know; 'private and confidential.' So you broke the other seals?" Mrs. May looked at him with the strange apprehension he had seen in her eyes when she appeared at his door the moment after his discovery.

"You know, of course, because I told you an hour later, though you would let me tell you very little."

Baron, as he met this queer gaze, smiled hard at her to prevent her guessing that he smarted with the fine reproach conveyed in the tone of her last words; but she appeared able to guess everything, for she reminded him that she had not had to wait that morning till he came downstairs to know what had happened above, but had shown him at the moment how she had been conscious of it an hour before, had passed on her side the same tormented night as he, and had had to exert extraordinary self-command not to rush up to his rooms while the study of the open packets was going on. "You're so sensitively organized and you've such mysterious powers that you're uncanny," Baron declared.

"I feel what takes place at a distance; that's all."

"One would think someone you liked was in danger."

"I told you that that was what was present to me the day I came up to see you."

"Oh, but you don't like me so much as that," Baron argued, laughing.

She hesitated. "No, I don't know that I do."



"HE CAME QUICKLY CLOSER."

"It must be for someone else—the other person concerned. The other day, however, you wouldn't let me tell you that person's name."

Mrs. May, at this, rose quickly. "I don't want to know it; it's none of my business."

"No, fortunately, I don't think it is," Baron rejoined, walking with her along the Parade. She had Sidney by the hand now, and the young man was on the other side of her. They moved toward the station—she had offered to go part of the way. "But with your miraculous gift it's a wonder you haven't divined."

"I only divine what I want," said Mrs. May.

"That's very convenient!" exclaimed Peter, to whom Sidney had presently come round again. "Only, being thus in the dark, it's difficult to see your motive for wishing the papers destroyed."

Mrs. May meditated, looking fixedly at the ground. "I thought you might do it to oblige me."

"Does it strike you that such an expectation, formed in such conditions, is reasonable?"

Mrs. May stopped short, and this time she looked at him with all her clouded clearness. "What do you mean to do with them?"

It was Peter Baron's turn to meditate, which he did, on the empty asphalt of the Parade (the "season," at Dover, was not yet), where their shadows were long in the afternoon light. He was under such a charm as he had never known, and he wanted immensely to be able to reply: "I'll do anything you like if you'll love me." These words, however, would have represented a responsibility and have constituted what was vulgarly termed an offer. An offer of what? he quickly asked himself here, as he had already asked himself after making in spirit other awkward dashes in the same direction—of what but his poverty, his obscurity, his attempts that had come to nothing, his abilities for which there was nothing to show? Mrs. May was not exactly a success, but she was a greater success than Peter Baron. Poor as he was he hated shabbiness (he knew she didn't love it), and as an insistent suitor he felt shabby. Therefore he didn't put the question in the words it would have pleased him most to hear himself utter, but he compromised, with an angry young pang, and said to her: "What will you do for me if I put an end to them?"

She shook her head sadly—it was always her prettiest movement. "I can promise nothing—oh, no, I can't promise! We must part now," she added. "You'll miss your train."

He looked at his watch, taking the hand she held out to him. She drew it away quickly and nothing then was left him, before hurrying to the station, but to catch up Sidney and squeeze him till he uttered a little shriek. On the way back to town the situation struck him as grotesque.

V.

It tormented him so the next morning that after threshing it out a little further he felt in his irritation almost injured. Mrs. May's interposition had made him simply uncomfortable, for she had taken the attitude of exerting pressure without, it appeared, recognizing on his part an equal right. She had imposed herself as an influence, yet she held herself aloof

as a participant; there were things she looked to him to do for her, yet she could tell him of no good that would come to him from the doing. She should either have had less to say or have been willing to say more, and he asked himself why he should be the sport of her moods and her mysteries. He recognized that her knack of punctual interference was striking, but it was just this apparent infallibility that he resented. Why didn't she set up at once as a professional clairvoyant and eke out her little income more successfully? In purely private life such a gift was disconcerting; her divinations, her evasions, disturbed at any rate his own tranquillity.

What disturbed it still further was that he received early in the day a visit from Mr. Locket, who, leaving him under no illusion as to the grounds of such an honor, remarked, as soon as he had got into the room, or, rather, while he still panted on the second flight and the smudged little slavey held open Baron's door, that he had taken up his young friend's invitation to look at Sir Dominick Ferrand's letters for himself. Peter drew them forth with a promptitude intended to show that he recognized the commercial character of the call and without attenuating the inconsequence of this departure from the last determination he had expressed to Mr. Locket. He showed his visitor the davenport and the hidden recess, and he smoked a cigarette, humming softly, with a sense of unwonted advantage and triumph, while the cautious editor sat silent, turning over the papers. For all his caution Mr. Locket was unable to keep a warmer light out of his judicial eye as he said to Baron, at last, with sociable brevity—a tone that took many things for granted—"I'll take them home with me—they require much attention."

The young man looked at him a moment. "Do you think they're genuine?" He didn't mean to be mocking, he meant not to be; but the words sounded so to his own ear, and he could see that they produced that effect on Mr. Locket.

"I can't in the least determine. I shall have to go into them at my leisure, and that's why I ask you to lend them to me."

He had shuffled the papers together with a movement charged, while he spoke, with the air of being preliminary

to that of thrusting them into a little black bag which he had brought with him and which, resting on the shelf of the davenport, struck Peter, who viewed it askance, as an object darkly editorial. It made our young man, somehow, suddenly apprehensive; the advantage of which he had just been conscious was about to be transferred by a quiet process of legerdemain to a person who already had advantages enough. Baron, in short, felt a deep pang of anxiety; he couldn't have said why. Mr. Locket took, decidedly, too many things for granted, and the explorer of Sir Dominick Ferrand's irregularities remembered afresh how clear he had been, after all, about his indisposition to traffic in them. He asked his visitor to what end he wished to remove the letters, since, on the one hand, there was no question now of the article in the *Promiscuous* which was to reveal their existence, and, on the other, he himself, as their owner, had a thousand insurmountable scruples about putting them into circulation.

Mr. Locket looked over his spectacles as over the battlements of a fortress. "I'm not thinking of the end—I'm thinking of the beginning. A few glances have assured me that such documents ought to be submitted to some competent eye."

"Oh, you mustn't show them to anyone!" Baron exclaimed.

"You may think me presumptuous, but the eye that I venture to allude to in those terms——"

"Is the eye now fixed so terribly on me?" Peter laughingly interrupted. "Oh, it would be interesting, I confess, to know how they strike a man of your acuteness!" It had occurred to him that by such a concession he might endear himself to a literary umpire hitherto inexorable. There would be no question of his publishing Sir Dominick Ferrand, but he might, in grateful recognition of services rendered, form the habit of publishing Peter Baron. "How long would it be your idea to retain them?" he inquired, in a manner which, he immediately became aware, was what incited Mr. Locket to begin stuffing the papers into his bag. With this perception he came quickly closer, and, laying his hand on the gaping receptacle, lightly drew its

two lips together. In this way the two men stood for a few seconds, touching, almost in the attitude of combat, looking hard into each other's eyes.

The tension was quickly relieved, however, by the surprised flush which mantled on Mr. Locket's brow. He fell back a few steps with an injured dignity that might have been a protest against physical violence. "Really, my dear young sir, your attitude is tantamount to an accusation of intended bad faith. Do you think I want to steal the confounded things?" In reply to such a challenge Peter could only hastily declare that he was guilty of no discourteous suspicion—he only wanted a limit named, a pledge of every precaution against accident. Mr. Locket admitted the justice of the demand, assured him he would restore the property within three days, and completed, with Peter's assistance, the little arrangements for removing it discreetly. When he was ready, his treacherous reticule distended with its treasures, he gave a lingering look at the inscrutable davenport. "It's how they ever got into that thing that puzzles one's brain!"

"There was some concatenation of circumstances that would doubtless seem natural enough if it were explained, but that one would have to remount the stream of time to ascertain. To one course I have definitely made up my mind: not to make any statement or any inquiry at the shop. I simply accept the mystery," said Peter, rather grandly.

"That would be thought a cheap escape if you were to put it into a story," Mr. Locket smiled.

"Yes, I shouldn't offer the story to you. I shall be impatient till I see my papers again," the young man called out, as his visitor hurried downstairs.

That evening, by the last delivery, he received a letter with the Dover postmark which was not from Miss Teagle. It was a slightly confused but friendly note, written that morning after breakfast, the ostensible purpose of which was to thank him for the amiability of his visit, to express regret at any appearance the writer might have had of meddling with what didn't concern her, and to let him know that the evening before, after he had left her, she had, in a moment of inspiration, got hold of the tail of a really musical idea

—a perfect accompaniment for the song he had so kindly given her. She had scrawled, as a specimen, a few bars at the end of her note, mystic, mocking musical signs which had no sense for her correspondent. The whole letter testified to a restless but rather pointless desire to remain in communication with him. In answering her, however, which he did that night before going to bed, it was on this bright possibility of their collaboration, its advantages for the future of each of them, that Baron principally expatiated. He spoke of this future with an eloquence of which he would have defended the sincerity, and drew of it a picture extravagantly rich. The next morning, as he was about to settle himself to tasks for some time terribly neglected, with a sense that after all it was rather a relief not to be sitting so close to Sir Dominick Ferrand, who had become dreadfully distracting, at the very moment at which he habitually addressed his preliminary invocation to the muse, he was agitated by the arrival of a telegram which proved to be an urgent request from Mr. Locket that he would immediately come down and see him. This represented, for poor Baron, whose funds were very low, another morning sacrificed, but somehow it didn't even occur to him that he might impose his own time upon the editor of the *Promiscuous*, the keeper of the keys of renown. He had some of the plasticity of the raw contributor. He gave the muse another holiday, feeling she was really ashamed to take it, and in course of time found himself in Mr. Locket's own chair at Mr. Locket's own table—so much nobler an expanse than the slippery slope of the davenport—considering with quick intensity in the white flash of certain words just brought out by his host, the quantity of happiness, of emancipation that might reside in £100.

Yes, that was what it meant: Mr. Locket, in the twenty-four hours, had discovered so much in Sir Dominick's literary remains that his visitor found him primed with an offer. A hundred pounds would be paid him that day, that minute, and no questions would be either asked or answered. "I take all the risks, I take all the risks," the editor of the *Promiscuous* repeated. The letters were out on the table, Mr. Locket was on the hearthrug,

like an orator on a platform, and Peter, under the influence of his sudden ultimatum, had dropped, rather weakly, into the seat which happened to be nearest, and which, as he became conscious it moved on a pivot, he whirled round so as to enable himself to look at his tempter with an eye intended to be cold. What surprised him most was to find Mr. Locket taking exactly the line about the expediency of publication which he would have expected Mr. Locket not to take. "Hush it all up; a barren scandal, an offence that can't be remedied, is the thing in the world that least justifies an airing;" some such line as that was the line he would have thought natural to a man whose life was spent in weighing questions of propriety, and who had only the other day objected, in the light of this virtue, to a work of the most disinterested art. But the author of that incorruptible masterpiece had put his finger on the place in saying to his interlocutor, on the occasion of his last visit, that, if given to the world in the pages of the *Promiscuous*, Sir Dominick's aberrations would sell the edition. It was not necessary for Mr. Locket to reiterate to his young friend his phrase about their making a sensation. If he wished to purchase the "rights," as theatrical people said, it was not to protect a celebrated name or to lock them up in a cupboard. That formula of Baron's covered all the ground, and one edition was a low estimate of the probable performance of the magazine.

Peter left the letters behind him and, on withdrawing from the editorial presence, took a long walk on the Embankment. His impressions were at war with each other—he was flurried by possibilities of which he yet denied the existence. He had consented to trust Mr. Locket with the papers a day or two longer, till he should have thought out the terms on which he might—in the event of certain occurrences—be induced to dispose of them. A hundred pounds were not this gentleman's last word, nor perhaps was mere unreasoning intractability Peter's own. He sighed as he looked unperceivingly at the animated river and reflected that it all might mean money. He needed money bitterly; he owed it in disquieting quarters. Mr. Locket had put it before him that he had a high

responsibility—that he might vindicate the disfigured truth, contribute a chapter to the history of England. “You haven’t a right to suppress such momentous facts,” the eager little editor had declared, thinking how the series (he would spread it into three numbers) would be the talk of the town. If Peter had money he might treat himself to ardor, to bliss. Mr. Locket had said, no doubt, justly enough, that there were a hundred questions one would have to meet, should one venture to play so daring a game. These questions, embarrassments, dangers—the danger, for instance, of the cropping-up of some lurking litigious relative—he would take over unreservedly and bear the brunt of dealing with. It was to be remembered that the papers were discredited, vitiated by their childish pedigree; such a preposterous origin, suggesting, as he had hinted before, the feeble ingenuity of a third-rate novelist, was a thing he should have to place himself at the positive disadvantage of being silent about. He would rather give no account of the matter at all than expose himself to the ridicule that such a story would infallibly excite. Couldn’t one see them in advance, the clever, taunting things the daily papers would say? Peter Baron had his guileless side, but he felt, as he worried with a stick that betrayed him the granite parapets of the Thames, that he was not such a fool as not to know how Mr. Locket would “work” the mystery of his marvellous find. Nothing could help it on better with the public than the impenetrability of the secret attached to it. If Mr. Locket should only be able to kick up dust enough over the circumstances that had guided his hand his fortune would literally be made. Peter thought £100 a low bid, yet he wondered how the Promiscuous could bring itself to offer such a sum—so large it loomed in the light of literary remuneration as hitherto revealed to our young man. The explanation of this anomaly was of course that the editor shrewdly saw a dozen ways in which he should get his money back. There would be, in the “sensation,” at a later stage, the making of a book in large

type—the book of the hour; and the profits of this scandalous volume, or, if one preferred the name, this reconstruction, before an impartial posterity, of a great historical humbug, the sum “down,” in other words, that any lively publisher would give for it, figured vividly in Mr. Locket’s calculations. It was therefore essentially an opportunity of dealing at first hand with the lively publisher that Peter was invited to forego. Peter gave a thoughtful laugh, feeling really happy that, on the spot, in the repaire he had lately



“MRS. MAY, IN HER BONNET AND JACKET, LOOKED OUT.”

quitted, he had not been tempted by a figure that would have approximately represented the value of his property. It was a good job, he mentally added, as he turned his face homeward, that there was so little likelihood of his having to struggle with that particular pressure.

VI.

When, half an hour later, he approached Jersey Villas, he noticed that the house door was open; then, as he reached the

gate, saw it make a frame for an unexpected presence. Mrs. May, in her bonnet and jacket, looked out from it as if she were expecting something—as if she had been passing to and fro to watch. Yet when he had expressed to her that it was a delightful welcome she replied that she had only thought there might possibly be a cab in sight. He offered to go and look for one, upon which it appeared that, after all, she didn't, as yet at least, want one. He went back with her into her sitting room, where she let him know that within a couple of days she had seen clearer what was best; she had determined to quit Jersey Villas and had come up to take away her things, which she had just been packing and getting together.

"I wrote you last night a charming letter in answer to yours," Baron said. "You didn't mention in yours that you were coming up."

"It wasn't your answer that brought me. It hadn't arrived when I came away."

"You'll see when you get back that my letter is charming."

"I daresay." Baron had observed that the room was not, as she had intimated, encumbered—Mrs. May's preparations for departure were not striking. She saw him look round, and, standing in front of the fireless grate with her hands behind her, she suddenly asked: "Where have you come from now?"

"From an interview with a literary friend."

"What are you concocting between you?"

"Nothing at all. We've fallen out—we don't agree."

"Is he a publisher?"

"He's an editor."

"Well, I'm glad you don't agree. I don't know what he wants, but, whatever it is, don't do it."

"He must do what I want!" said Baron.

"And what's that?"

"Oh, I'll tell you when he has done it!" Baron begged her to let him hear the "musical idea" she had mentioned in her letter; on which she took off her hat and jacket and, seating herself at her piano, gave him, with a sentiment of which the very first notes thrilled him,

the accompaniment of his song. She phrased the words with her sketchy sweetness, and he sat there as if he had been held in a velvet vice, throbbing with the emotion, irrecoverable ever after in its freshness, of the young artist in the presence for the first time of "production"—the proofs of his book, the hanging of his picture, the rehearsal of his play. When she had finished he asked again for the same delight, and then for more music and for more; it did him such a world of good, kept him quiet and safe, smoothed out the creases of his spirit. She dropped her own experiments and gave him immortal things, and he lounged there, pacified and charmed, feeling the mean little room grow large and vague, and happy possibilities come back. Abruptly, at the piano, she called out to him: "Those papers of yours—the letters you found—are not in the house!"

"No, they're not in the house."

"I was sure of it! No matter—it's all right!" she added. She herself was pacified—trouble was a false note. Later, he was on the point of asking her how she knew the objects she had mentioned were not in the house; but he let it pass. The subject was a profitless riddle—a puzzle that grew grotesquely bigger, like some monstrosity seen in the darkness, as one opened one's eyes to it. He closed his eyes—he wanted another vision. Besides, she had shown him that she had extraordinary senses—her explanation would have been stranger than the fact. Moreover they had other things to talk about, in particular, the question of her putting off her return to Dover till the morrow, and dispensing, meanwhile, with the valuable protection of Sidney. This was indeed but another face of the question of her dining with him somewhere that evening (where else should she dine?)—accompanying him, for instance, just for an hour in their deadly respectable lives of Bohemia to a jolly little place in Soho. Mrs. May declined to have her life abused, but in fact, at the proper moment, at the jolly little place, to which she did accompany him—it dealt in macaroni and Chianti—the pair put their elbows on the crumpled cloth and, face to face, with their little emptied coffee cups pushed away and the young man's cigarette lighted by her command, became increasingly confiden-

tial. They went afterwards to the theatre, in cheap places, and came home in "busses" and under umbrellas.

On the way back Peter Baron turned something over in his mind as he had never turned anything before; it was the question of whether, at the end, she would let him come into her sitting room for five minutes. He felt, on this point, a passion of suspense and impatience, and yet for what would it be but to tell her how poor he was? This was literally the moment to say it, so supremely depleted had the hour of Bohemia left him. Even Bohemia was too expensive, and yet in the course of the day his whole temper on the subject of certain fitnesses had changed. At Jersey Villas (it was near midnight, and Mrs. May, scratching a light for her glimmering taper, had said: "Oh, yes, come in for a minute if you like!"), in her precarious parlor, which was indeed, after the brilliancies of the evening, a return to ugliness and truth, she let him stand while he explained that he had certainly everything in the way of fame and fortune still to gain, but that youth and love and faith and energy—to say nothing of her supreme dearness—were all on his side. Why, if one's beginnings were rough, should one add to the hardness of the conditions by giving up the dream which, if she would only hear him out, would make just the blessed difference? Whether Mrs. May heard him out or not is a circumstance as to which this chronicle happens to be silent; but after he had got possession of both her hands and breathed into her face for a moment all the intensity of his tenderness—in the relief and joy of utterance he felt it carry him like a rising flood—she checked him with better reason, with cold, sweet afterthought in which he felt there was something deep. Her slow, thoughtful head-shake was prettier than ever, yet it had never meant so many firm, sad things—impossibilities and memories, independences and pieties, and a kind of inarticulate pain in this ruin of a friendship that had been happy. She had liked him—if she hadn't she wouldn't have let him think so!—but she protested that she had not, in the odious, vulgar sense, "encouraged" him. Moreover, she couldn't talk of such things in that place, at that time, and she begged him not to make her regret her mere good-nature in

staying over. There were peculiarities in her position, considerations insurmountable. She got rid of him with kind words; and afterwards, in the dull, humiliated night, he felt that he had been put in his place. Women in her situation, women who, after having really loved, had lost, usually lived on into the new dawns in which old ghosts steal away. But there was something in his whimsical neighbor that struck him as gently invulnerable.

VII.

"I've had time to look a little further into what we're prepared to do, and I find the case is one in which I should consider the advisability of going to an extreme length," said Mr. Locket. Jersey Villas the next morning had had the privilege of again receiving the editor of the *Promiscuous*, and he sat once more at the davenport, where the bone of contention, in the shape of a large, loose heap of papers that showed how much they had been handled, was placed well in view. "We shall see our way to offering you £300, but we shouldn't, I must positively assure you, see it a single step further."

Peter Baron, in his dressing gown and slippers, with his hands in his pockets, crept softly about the room, repeating, below his breath and with inflections that, for his own sake, he endeavored to make humorous: "£300! £300!" His state of mind was far from hilarious, for he felt poor and sore and disappointed; but he wanted to prove to himself that he was gallant—that he was made, in general and in particular, of undiscourageable stuff. The first thing he had been aware of, on stepping into his front room, was that a four-wheeled cab, with Mrs. May's luggage upon it, stood at the door of No. 3. Permitting himself wan glances from behind his curtain, he saw the mistress of his thoughts come out of the house, attended by Mrs. Bundy, and take her place in the modest vehicle. After this his eyes rested for a long time on the sprigged cotton back of the landlady, who kept bobbing at the window of the cab an endlessly moralizing old head. Mrs. May had really taken flight—he had made Jersey Villas impossible for her—but Mrs. Bundy, with a magnanimity rare in her profession, seemed to assure her that she

could put herself in her place. Baron felt that his own parting had, for the present at least, been enacted; every instinct of delicacy advised him to remain invisible.

Mr. Locket talked a long time, and Peter Baron listened and waited. He reflected that his willingness to listen would probably excite hopes in his visitor—hopes which he himself was ready to contemplate without a scruple. He felt no pity for Mr. Locket and had no consideration for his suspense or for his possible illusions; he only felt sick and forsaken and in want of comfort and of money. Yet it was a kind of outrage to his dignity to have the knife held to his throat, and he was irritated above all by the ground on which Mr. Locket put the question—the ground of a service rendered to historical truth. It might be—he wasn't clear; it might be—the question was deep, too deep, probably, for his wisdom; but at any rate he had to control himself not to interrupt angrily such dry, interested palaver, the false voice of commerce and of cant. He stared tragically out of the window and saw the stupid rain begin to fall; the day was duller even than his own soul, and Jersey Villas looked so sordidly hideous that it was no wonder Mrs. May couldn't stand them. Hideous as they were, he should have to tell Mrs. Bundy in the course of the day that he was obliged to seek humbler quarters. Suddenly he interrupted Mr. Locket; he observed to him: "I take it that if I should make you this concession the hospitality of the Promiscuous would be by that very fact unrestrictedly secured to me."

Mr. Locket stared. "Hospitality—secured?" He thumbed the proposition as if it were a hard peach.

"I mean that of course you wouldn't—in courtesy, in gratitude—keep on declining my things."

"I should give them my best attention—as I've always done in the past."



"JOLLY LITTLE PLACE IN SOHO."

Peter Baron hesitated. It was a case in which there would have seemed to be some chance for the ideally canny aspirant in such an advantage as he possessed; but after a moment the blood rushed into his face with the shame of the idea of pleading for his productions in the name of anything but their merit. It was as if he had stupidly said evil of them. Nevertheless, he added the interrogation: "Would you, for instance, publish my little story?"

"The one I read (and objected to some features of) the other day? Do you mean—a—with the alteration?" Mr. Locket continued.

"Oh, no, I mean utterly without it. The pages you want altered contain, as I explained to you very lucidly, I think, the very *raison d'être* of the work, and it would therefore, it seems to me, be an imbecility of the first magnitude to cancel them." Peter had really renounced all hope that his critic would understand what he meant, but, under favor of circumstances, he couldn't forbear to taste the luxury, which probably never again would come within his reach, of being really plain, for one wild moment, with an editor.

Mr. Locket gave a constrained smile. "Think of the scandal, Mr. Baron."

"But isn't this other scandal just what you're going in for?"

"It will be a great public service."

"You mean it will be a big scandal, whereas my poor story would be a very small one, and that it's only out of a big one that money's to be made."

Mr. Locket got up—he too had his dignity to vindicate. "Such a sum as I offer you ought really to be an offset against all claims."

"Very good—I don't mean to make any, since you don't really care for what I write. I take note of your offer," Peter pursued, "and I engage to give you to-night (in a few words left by my own hand at your house) my absolutely definite and final reply."

Mr. Locket's movements, as he hovered near the relics of the eminent statesman, were those of some feathered parent fluttering over a threatened nest. If he had brought his huddled brood back with him this morning it was because he had felt sure enough of closing the bargain to be able to be graceful. He kept an oblique gaze on the papers and remarked that he was afraid that before leaving them he must elicit some assurance that in the meanwhile Peter would not place them in any other hands. Peter, at this, gave a laugh of harsher cadence than he intended, asking, justly enough, on what privilege his visitor rested such a demand, and why he himself was disqualified from offering his wares to the highest bidder. "Surely you wouldn't hawk such things about?" cried Mr. Locket; but before Baron had time to retort cynically, he added: "I'll publish your little story."

"Oh, thank you!"

"I'll publish anything you'll send me," Mr. Locket continued, as he went out. Peter had before this virtually given his word that for the letters he would treat only with the Promiscuous.

The young man passed, during a portion of the rest of the day, the strangest hours of his life. Yet he thought of them afterwards not as a phase of temptation, though they had been full of the emotion that accompanies an intense vision of alternatives. The struggle was already over; it seemed to him that, poor as he was, he was not poor enough to take Mr. Locket's

money; he looked at the opposite courses with the self-possession of a man who has chosen, but this self-possession was in itself the most exquisite of excitements. It was really a high revulsion and a sort of noble pity. He seemed, indeed, to have his finger upon the pulse of history and to be in the secret of the gods. He had them all in his hand, the tablets and the scales and the torch. He couldn't keep a character together, but he might easily pull one to pieces. That would be "creative work" of a kind—he could reconstruct the character less pleasingly, could show an unknown side of it. Mr. Locket had had a good deal to say about responsibility; and responsibility, in truth, sat there with him all the morning, while he revolved in his narrow cage, and, watching the crude spring rain on the windows, thought of the dismalness to which, at Dover, Mrs. May was going back. This influence took, in fact, the form, put on the personality, of poor Sir Dominick Ferrand; he was as present, as perceptible in it, as coldly and strangely pressing, as if he had been a haunting ghost and had risen beside his own old hearthstone. Peter Baron was conscious of his company, and, indeed, had spent so many hours in it of late, following him up at the museum and comparing his different portraits, engravings and lithographs, in which there seemed to be conscious, pleading eyes for the betrayer, that this queer impression was largely vivified with detail. Sir Dominick was very dumb, but he was very terrible in his dependence, and Peter would have felt too uneasy to stay in a room of which he had taken such intense possession had it not been for the young man's complete acceptance of the impossibility of getting out of a tight place by exposing another. It didn't matter that the other was dead; it didn't matter that he was dishonest. Peter felt him sufficiently alive to suffer, and perceived the rectification of history so conscientiously desired by Mr. Locket to be somehow for himself not an imperative task. It had come over him too definitely that, in a case where one's success was to hinge upon an act of extradition, it would minister most, on the whole, to an easy conscience to let the success go. No, no—even should he be starving he couldn't make money out of Sir Dominick's disgrace. He was almost surprised

at the violence of the horror with which, as he shuffled mournfully about, the idea of any such profit inspired him. What was Sir Dominick to him, after all? He wished he had never come across him.

In one of his brooding pauses at the window—the window out of which never again, apparently, should he see Mrs. May glide across the little garden with the step for which he had liked her from the first—he became aware that the rain was about to intermit and the sun to make some grudging amends. This was a sign that he might go out; he had a vague impression that there were things to be done. He had work to look for, and a cheaper lodging, and a new idea (every idea he had ever cherished had left him), in addition to which the promised little word was to be dropped at Mr. Locket's door. He looked at his watch and was surprised at the hour, for he had nothing but a heart-ache to show for so much time. He would have to dress quickly, but as he passed to his bedroom to do so his eye caught the disordered heap of letters which Mr. Locket had deposited on his davenport. They startled him and, staring at them, he stopped for an instant, half-amused, half-annoyed at their being still in existence. He had so completely destroyed them in spirit that he had taken the act for granted, and he was now reminded of the distinct stages of which an intention must consist to be sincere. Baron went at the papers with all his sincerity, and at his empty grate (where there lately had been no fire, and he had only to remove a horrible ornament of tissue paper dear to Mrs. Bundy) he burned the collection with infinite method. It made him feel happier to watch the incineration of each precious individual—if happiness be the right word to apply to his sense, in the process, of something so crisp and crackling that it suggested the death rustle of bank notes.

When, ten minutes later, he came back into his sitting room, he seemed to himself, oddly, unexpectedly, in the presence of a bigger view. It was as if some interfering mass had been removed so that he could see more sky and more country. Yet the opposite houses were, naturally, still there, and if the grimy little place looked lighter it was doubtless only because the rain had indeed stopped and the

sun was pouring in. Peter went to the window to open it to the altered air, and in doing so beheld, at the garden gate, the humble "growler" in which, a few hours before, he had seen Mrs. May take her departure. It was unmistakable—he remembered the knock-kneed white horse; but this made the fact that his friend's luggage no longer surmounted it only the more mystifying. Perhaps the cabman had already removed the luggage—he was now on his box smoking the short pipe of repose. As Peter turned into the room again his ears caught a knock at his own door, a knock explained, as soon as he had responded, by the exhilarated image of Mrs. Bundy.

"Please, sir, it's to say she've come back."

"What has she come back for?" Baron's question sounded ungracious, but his heartache had given another throb, and he felt a dread of another wound. It was as if he had been played with.

"I think it's for you, sir," said Mrs. Bundy. "She'll see you for a moment, if you'll be so good, in the old place."

Peter followed his hostess downstairs, and Mrs. Bundy ushered him, with her company flourish, into the apartment she had fondly designated.

"I went away this morning, and I've only returned for an instant," said Mrs. May, as soon as Mrs. Bundy had closed the door. He saw that she was different now; something had happened that had made her kinder.

"Have you been all the way to Dover and back?"

"No, but I've been to Victoria. I've left my luggage there—I've been driving about."

"I hope you've enjoyed it."

"Very much. I've been to see Mr. Morrish."

"Mr. Morrish?"

"The musical publisher. I showed him our song. I played it for him, and he's delighted with it. He declares it's just the thing. He has given me fifty pounds. I think he believes in us," Mrs. May went on, while Baron stared at the wonder—too sweet to be safe, it seemed to him as yet—of her standing there again before him and speaking of what they had in common. "Fifty pounds! fifty pounds!" she exclaimed, fluttering at him her hap-

py-check. She had come back, the first thing, to tell him, and of course half of the fifty pounds would be for him. She was rosy, jubilant, natural, she chattered like a happy woman. She said they must do more, ever so much more. Mr. Morrish had practically promised he would take anything that was as good as that. She had kept her cab because she was going to Dover; she couldn't leave the others alone. It was an infirm and languid vehicle, but Baron, after a little, appreciated its pace, for she had consented to his getting in with her and driving, this time in earnest, to Victoria. She had only come to tell him the good news—she repeated this assurance more than once. They talked of it so profoundly that it drove everything else for the time out of his head—his duty to Mr. Locket, the remarkable sacrifice he had just achieved, and even the odd coincidence, matching with the oddity of all the others, of her having alighted in the house again, as if with one of her famous divinations, at the very moment the bothersome papers, the origin really of their intimacy, had ceased to exist. But she, on her side, also had evidently forgotten the bothersome papers; she never mentioned them again, and Peter Baron never boasted of what he had done with them. He was silent for a while, from curiosity to see if her fine nerves had really given her a hint; and then, later, when it came to be a question of his permanent attitude, he was silent, prodigiously, religiously, tremulously silent in consequence of an extraordinary conversation that he had with her.

This conversation took place at Dover, when he went down to give her the money for which, at Mr. Morrish's bank, he had exchanged the check she had left with him. That check, or rather certain things it represented, had made somehow all the difference in their relations. The difference was great, and Baron could think of nothing but this confirmed vision of their being able to work fruitfully together that would account for so rapid a change. She didn't talk of impossibilities now—she didn't seem to want to stop him off; only when, the day following his arrival at Dover with the fifty pounds (he had, after all, to agree to share them with her—he couldn't expect her to take a pres-

ent of money from him), he returned to the question over which they had had their little scene the night they dined together—on this occasion (he had brought a portmanteau and he was staying) she mentioned that there was something very particular she had it on her conscience to tell him before letting him commit himself. There appeared in her face as she spoke of this duty a light of warning that frightened him; it was charged with something so strange that for an instant he held his breath. This flash of ugly possibilities passed, however, and it was with the gesture of taking still tenderer possession of her, checked, indeed, by the grave, important way she held up a finger, that he answered: "Tell me everything—tell me!"

"You must know what I am—who I am; you must know especially what I'm not! There's a name for it, a hideous, cruel name. It's not my fault! Others have known, I've had to speak of it—it has made a great difference in my life. Surely you must have guessed!" she went on, with the faintest quaver of irony, letting him now take her hand, which felt as cold as her hard duty. "Don't you see I've no belongings, no relations, no friends, nothing at all, in all the world, of my own? I was only a poor girl."

"A poor girl?" Baron was mystified, touched, distressed, piecing dimly together what she meant, but feeling, in a great surge of pity, that it was only something more to love her for.

"My mother—my poor mother," said Mrs. May. She paused with this, and, through gathering tears, her eyes met his as if to plead with him to understand. He understood, and drew her closer, but she kept herself free still, to continue: "She was a poor girl—she was only a governess; she was alone, she thought he loved her. He did—I think it was the only happiness she ever knew. But she died of it."

"Oh, I'm so glad you tell me—it's so sweet of you!" Baron murmured. "Then—your father?" He hesitated, as if with his hands on old wounds.

"He had his own troubles, but he was kind to her. It was all misery and folly—he was married. He wasn't happy—there were good reasons, I believe, for that. I know it from letters, I know it

from a person who is dead. Everyone is dead now—it's too far off. That's the only good thing. He was very kind to me; I remember him, though I didn't know, then, as a little girl, who he was. He put me with some very good people—he did what he could for me. I think, later, his wife knew—a lady who came to see me once after his death. I was a very little girl, but I remember many things. What he could he did—something that helped me afterwards, something that helps me now. I think of him with a strange pity—I see him!" said Mrs. May, with the faint past in her eyes.

"You mustn't say anything against him," she added, gently and gravely.

"Never—never; for he has only made it more exquisite to care for you."

"You must wait, you must think; we must wait together," she went on. "You can't tell, and you must give me time. Now that you know, it's all right; but you had to know. Doesn't it make us better friends?" asked

Mrs. May, with a tired smile which had the effect of placing the whole story further and further away. The next moment, however, she added quickly, as if with the sense that it couldn't be far enough: "You don't know, you can't judge, you must let it settle. Think of it, think of it; oh, you will, and leave it so. I must have time myself, oh, I must! Yes, you must believe me."

She turned away from him, and he remained looking at her a moment. "Ah, how I shall work for you!" he exclaimed.

"You must work for yourself; I'll help you." She had faced toward him again, and she added, hesitating, thinking:

"You had better know, perhaps, who he was."

Baron shook his head, smiling confidently. "I don't care a straw."

"I do—a little. He was a great man."

"There must indeed have been some good in him."

"He was a high celebrity. You've often heard of him."

Baron wondered an instant. "I've no doubt you're a princess!" he said with a laugh. She made him nervous.

"I'm not ashamed of him. He was Sir Dominick Ferrand."



"HE BURNED THE COLLECTION WITH INFINITE METHOD."

Baron saw in her face, in a few seconds, that she had seen something in his. He knew that he stared, then turned pale; it had the effect of a powerful shock. He was cold for an instant, as he had just found her, with the sense of danger, the confused horror of having dealt a blow. But the blood rushed back to its courses with his still quicker consciousness of safety, and he could make out through this

momentary blur that his emotion struck her simply as a violent surprise. He gave a muffled murmur: "Ah, it's you, my beloved!" which lost itself as he drew her close and held her long, in the intensity of his embrace and the wonder of his escape. It took more than a minute for him to say over to himself often enough, with his hidden face: "Ah, she must never, never know!"

She never knew; she only learned, when she asked him casually, that he had in fact destroyed the old letters she had had such a fantastic anxiety about. The sensibility, the curiosity they had had the queer privilege of exciting in her had

lapsed with the event as capriciously as they had arisen, and she appeared to have forgotten, or rather to attribute now to other causes, the agitation and several of the odd incidents that accompanied them. They naturally gave Peter Baron rather more to think about, much food, indeed, for clandestine meditation, some of which, in spite of the pains he took not to be caught, was noted by his friend and interpreted, to his knowledge, as depression produced by the long probation she succeeded in putting him to. He was more patient than she could guess, with all her guessing, for if he was tested she herself was, for months, not left unstudied. It came back to him again and again that if the documents he had burned proved anything, they proved that the sins of Sir Dominick Ferrand were not all of one order. The woman he loved was the daughter of her father, he couldn't get

over that. What was more to the point was that as he came to know her better and better—for they did work together under Mr. Morrish's protection—his affection was a still less negligible quantity. He sometimes wondered, in the light of her goodness—their marriage had brought out even more than he believed there was of it—whether the relics in the davenport were genuine. That piece of furniture is still almost as useful to him as Mr. Morrish's patronage. There is a tremendous run, as this gentleman calls it, on several of their songs. Baron, nevertheless, still tries his hand also at prose, and his offerings are now not always declined by the magazines. But he has never approached the *Promiscuous* again. This periodical published in due course a highly appreciative study of the remarkable career of Sir Dominick Ferrand.



AFTER LONG ABSENCE.

BY LILLA CABOT PERRY.

HERE, in this room where first we met,
 And where we said farewell with tears,
 Here, where you swore, "Though you forget,
 My love shall deeper grow with years!"

Here, where the pictures on the wall,
 The very rugs upon the floor,
 The smallest objects you recall—
 I am awaiting you once more.

The books that we together read
 From off their shelves they beckon me;
 All here seems living—what is dead?
 What is the ghost I fear to see?

Unchanged am I; did you despise
 My love as small?—it fills my heart!
 You come, a stranger from your eyes
 Looks out, and meeting first we part!



THE FRIENDLY BANSHEE.

CELEBRATED BRITISH SPECTRES.

BY ESTHER SINGLETON.

WHETHER "Spirits live insphered in regions mild of calm and serene air," or whether the perturbed ghost bursts the fetters of his charnel house, and

"breaks the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walked when claspt in clay,"

we know not ; but we are conscious of a weird delight in "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls" regarding the invisible world over which Azrael, the Angel of Death, spreads his dark and mysterious wings.

Sir Walter Scott says, in his *Demonology and Witchcraft*, that the "universal belief of the inhabitants of the earth in the existence of spirits separated from the encumbrance and incapacities of the body is founded on the consciousness of the divinity that speaks in our bosoms and demonstrates to all men, except the few who are hardened to the celestial voice, that there is within us a portion of the divine substance which is not subject to the law of death and dissolution."

Herbert Spencer goes so far as to trace religious consciousness through the theory of ghosts. He accounts for the earliest belief in the supernatural by "man being led through dreams and shadows and other causes, to look at himself as a double essence, corporeal and spiritual." What is this hidden self? Is there a correlation between matter and spirit? Are these, as Balzac would have it, "different states of the same entity"?

Investigation is checked by the limitation of our imperfect senses. Because all vibrations of light beyond the violet ray are imperceptible to our vision, there may be many mysteries hidden in what is to us absolute darkness, just as the human tympanum cannot record shrill sound waves that are perfectly audible to certain animals.

The microscope and the telescope have revealed undreamed-of wonders in the world-in-little and the world-in-large, and until some future genius gives to us a ghostroscope or a spectrophone shall we say that apparitions are impossible, and that he who claims to have seen them is under the spell

of Maya—a name that Buddhists give to illusion?

Is it more wonderful that there should be some shadowy relation between man and the hidden world than that the molecules of earth pulsate in harmony with those of distant stars? "Every point in space thrills with an infinity of vibrations passing through it in all directions," says Herbert Spencer, and the conception to which "man tends is much less that of a universe of dead matter than that of a universe everywhere alive."

The phenomena of apparitions have never been satisfactorily explained; and we must not wave them aside as superstitions, unworthy of consideration: it would be more intelligent to agree with Madame de Staël, who said that she did not believe in ghosts, but she was afraid of them.

The old traditions have in them some stronger factor than a picturesque and romantic quality.

"All things are but unaltered: nothing dies;
And here and there the unbodied spirit flies,"

says Dryden, but what part supernatural phenomena hold in the universe, and how and why the spirit manifests itself—if, indeed, manifestations are possible—is among "the mysteries which become more mysterious the more they are thought about."

It is almost blasphemy in Ireland to disbelieve in the "weird, wailing banshee that sings by night her mournful cry." Hovering over the doomed mansion, this "White Lady of Sorrow," with robe flowing wide upon the night and her tangled tresses blown by the wind, warns the ancient family to whom she is attached of approaching death. This "friendly banshee" is described as a young and beautiful female spirit with pale features, black or golden hair, and soft, sorrowful eyes of either blue or black. "Her long white drapery falls to her feet as she floats in the air in pitying tenderness, bestowing a benediction on the soul she summons to the invisible world."

The "hateful banshee" is a horrible hag, upon whose angry face is written curse after curse which she cannot speak, but her outstretched arms call down maledictions upon the hated race. Like a fiend she howls with demoniacal delight. The ban-

shee is faithful to the family to which she belongs, remaining their last possession when fortune has fled. Her song is commonly heard a day or two before the death of the person for whom the warning is intended, and this is often inaudible save to the doomed individual.

The apparition of the "Radiant Boy" is not uncommon in the history of haunted houses, where he appears as a child of great beauty, sometimes naked and sometimes clothed in white. But his head is always a mass of golden curls and his body is luminous. Whoever sees this vision is certain to reach the pinnacle of fame and to die by his own violence. This superstition has been several times verified, the most notable case being that of Lord Castlereagh, the second Marquis of Londonderry, who once sought shelter, when Captain Stewart, during a hunting expedition in the north of Ireland at the house of an Irish gentleman. He was assigned by the butler to the haunted room, where, wearied with his day's shooting, he soon slept soundly. The narrative says that "he awoke suddenly and was startled by such a vivid light in the room that he thought it was on fire; but on turning to look at the grate he saw that the fire was out, though it was from the chimney the light proceeded. He sat up in bed trying to discover what it was, when he perceived, gradually disclosing itself, the form of a beautiful naked boy surrounded by a dazzling radiance. The boy looked on him earnestly, and then the vision faded, and all was dark." Captain Stewart, thinking that he was the victim of a practical joke, conducted himself at breakfast on the following morning with disdain, but finally told his host of the circumstance. He spoke to the other guests, who denied the charge, and "suddenly he clapped his hand to his forehead, uttered an exclamation, and rang the bell. 'Hamilton,' said he to the butler, 'where did Captain Stewart sleep last night?'

"'Well, sir,' replied the man in an apologetic tone, 'you know every place was full, so I gave him the Boy's room; but I lit a blazing fire to keep him from coming out.'"

Whether Lord Castlereagh saw this vision or not is a matter for conjecture, but the fact remains that he became head of the government, and died by his own hand.

Newstead abbey, the ancestral home of Lord Byron, is haunted by a number of ghosts and spirits. Lord Byron not only believed in the existence of the "Black Friar," the most noted spectre of the place, but asserted that he had seen it. This was said to frequent the "haunted chamber" adjoining Byron's bedroom, and walked through the abbey as the poet describes :

"A monk arrayed
In cowl and beads and dusky garb appeared,
Now in the moonlight and now lapsed in shade."

The "Black Friar" is the evil genius of the Byron family, and forebodes misfortune to whom it appears.

Another spectre of Newstead is that called "Sir John Byron the Little with the Great Beard," who is said to walk the halls at the midnight hour. One young

lady on a visit to Newstead some years ago said that she saw "Sir John the Little" reading out of an old book from a comfortable chair by an open fireplace in broad daylight. Other apparitions have been seen about this old building, and Washington Irving mentions that one of Byron's cousins, spending a night at Newstead, saw a lady in white come out of the wall on one side of the room and go into the opposite wall.

Watton abbey, Yorkshire, rejoices in the spectre of a "Headless Nun," who is clad in bloody raiment.

Two ghostly legends are connected with Holland house, London, which was built around an old manor house belonging to Sir William Cope, whose daughter Isabel was married to Sir Henry Rich, made Earl of Holland in 1624. He was imprisoned for disloyalty in Warwick castle, and beheaded in 1648 in the palace yard. His attire on the scaffold was quite unusual, for he wore a white satin waistcoat and a white cap trimmed with silver lace; but for all this he died bravely. His spirit is supposed to haunt the "gilt room" of Holland house, where he walks at midnight, carrying his head in his hand.

The other story is placed within the grounds of Holland house in the "Green Lane," formerly called "Nightingale Lane."

Here the mistress of Holland house is supposed to meet the apparition of herself as a death warning. This spiritual manifestation has several times been experienced: the beautiful Lady Diana Rich, daughter to the Earl of Holland, who, walking in her father's garden, met her own apparition and died a month later; and her two sis-



LADY DIANA RICH MEETING HERSELF IN THE GARDEN OF HOLLAND HOUSE.

ters—Lady Isabella Thinne and Mary, wife of the Earl of Breadalbane—also saw this peculiar reflection of themselves shortly before death.

This is reminiscent of the superstition that if one would watch for three consecutive years on St. Mark's eve, and on the eve of St. John the Baptist, during the "silent, solemn hour when night and morning meet," he would see a ghostly procession of the spectres of all those doomed to die in the parish within the coming year.

The White Lady of Skipsea has long haunted the Castle of Skipsea, in Yorkshire. She is the pale spectre of a beautiful young woman of mournful mien. Clad in white drapery, she flits around the moats of the castle, and is sometimes seen in the daylight. The White Lady of Skipsea was the wife of Drugo de Bevere, a Flemish soldier of fortune who served under William the Conqueror, by whom he was rewarded for his service at Hastings with a grant of land and the hand of his niece. Drugo was brutal and tyrannical, and at length poisoned his wife. Immediately after the deed he fled, and nothing more was heard of him. It is supposed that his victim was buried in the castle.

Another white lady haunts Samlesbury hall, near Preston, Lancashire. She is said to be Lady Dorothy, daughter of Sir John Southworth, who forbade her marriage with the heir of a neighboring house of honor. Her lover was slain before her eyes by her brothers, and Lady Dorothy became mad in consequence. The legend says that she may be seen at night gliding through the corridors to meet her lover in the grounds of the castle. On

reaching a certain spot the phantoms "stand still, and as they seem to utter soft wailings of despair, they embrace each other, and their forms rise slowly from the earth and melt away into the clear blue of the surrounding sky."

Blenkinsopp castle, Northumberland, has its "White Lady," supposed to know where a certain chest of gold lies buried; and the celebrated ghost of Bolling Hall, near Bradford, is also a woman in white who appeared to the bloodthirsty earl after he had given orders for a general massacre. Her cries of "Pity poor Bradford" caused him to revoke his command.

Another white spectre is that of Lady Bothwellhaugh, who appears with her infant and walks through the ruins of her house in Woodhouselee, from which she was expelled during her husband's absence by one of his enemies, and doomed to wander without clothing in the open fields. She became mad and died. One of these beings, "clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," has achieved a literary reputation—the "White Lady



PEARLIN JEAN.

of Avenel," who glides through the pages of *The Abbot* and *The Monastery*, created by the might and mastery of Scott's wizard pen.

Rainham, the seat of the Marquis of Townshend, in Norfolk, is noted for its spectre, "The Brown Lady," of whom there is unfortunately no known legend. But many persons unacquainted with the tradition when visiting the house have inquired of the host, "Who is the lady in brown seen so often upon the stairway?" She is described as a stately lady who wears a rich brown brocade and a sort of coif upon her head.

A "Woman in Gray" haunts Hackwood house, a mansion near Basingstoke.

Perhaps the most interesting and picturesque of all the Scottish castles is that of Glamis, twenty-five miles from Perth. This is said to be the oldest castle in Scotland, and consequently its legends are inexhaustible. The first of importance is that Duncan was here murdered by Macbeth, whose sword and shirt of mail are still to be seen in the armory. Scott, who passed a night here, speaks of its secret chamber, "the entrance to which, by the law or custom of the family, must only be known to three persons at once—the Earl of Strathmore, his heir-apparent, and any third person whom they may take into their confidence." He also describes his eerie feelings when left alone in his remote apartment. "I must own," he writes, "that as I heard door after door shut after my conductor had retired, I began to consider myself too far from the living, and somewhat too near the dead."

"As a Strathmore a Strathmore succeeds," says an authority, "there is generally much talk of the old story being exploded at last. Gay gallants in lace ruffles, beaux, bucks, bloods and dandies have, until their twenty-first birthday, made light of the family mystery, and some have gone so far as to make after-dinner promises 'to hoist the old ghost with his own petard,' and tell the whole stupid old story in the smoking room at night, after the coming-of-age humbug was over. This promise has been made more than once, but it has never been kept."

Another legend is, that the Earl Patie, the "Wild Earl of Strathmore," played cards one night with "the de'il himself;" and a bearded spectre dwells in the most ancient portion of the castle, and hovers over the couches of children at night, vanishing abruptly. Stranger than these is the noise of hammering, which was heard by a visitor to Glamis castle, and described in *All the Year Round* for 1880. "In the morning she appeared at the breakfast table quite cheerful and self-possessed. To the inquiry how she had slept, she replied: 'Well, thanks, very well, up to four o'clock in the morning. But your Scottish carpenters seem to work very early.

I suppose they put up their scaffolding quickly, though, for they are quiet now.' This speech produced a dead silence, and the speaker saw with astonishment that the faces of the family were very pale. She was asked, as she valued the friendship of all there, never to speak to them on that subject again; there had been no carpenters at Glamis for months past."

In the deepening gloom of the twilight the visionary of Scotland often witnessed the wraiths of those who were about to die, trooping in ghostly silence through the pale mists of the approaching night. The weird Bodach Glas crossed the path of the death-doomed McIvor; the Bodach au Dun, or "Ghost of the Hill," warned the Rothmurchas of calamity; the "Spectre of the Bloody Hand" frightened the Kincardines; the Bodach Gartin glided through Gartinbig house; and Manch Monlach, the "Girl with the Hairy Left Hand," visited the halls of the Tulloch Gorns.

One of the most picturesque of Scottish spirits is "Pearlin Jean," so called from the quantity of pearlin lace with which her silken gown is trimmed. She dwells at Allanbank, a seat of the Stuarts. She was a Frenchwoman whom the first baronet of Allanbank met in Paris when a young man. Recalled to Scotland, he left France without bidding his love farewell; but she suddenly made her appearance, and stepped on the fore wheel of the coach. The postilion was ordered to drive on, and the lady fell and was killed. "On a dusky autumnal evening, when Mr. Stuart drove under the arched gateway of Allanbank, he perceived Pearlin Jean sitting on the top, her head and shoulders covered with blood. After this for many years the house was haunted; doors shut and opened with great noise at midnight; the rustling of silks and pattering of high-heeled shoes were heard in bedrooms and passages."

Another remarkable Scottish ghost is the one that haunted Spedlin's tower. The tower belonged to Sir Alexander Jardine of Applegarth, who committed to its dungeon a miller named Porteous. Called suddenly to Edinburgh, Sir Alexander carried by mistake the keys of the tower, and the prisoner perished from hunger. The miller's ghost took possession of the tower, from whence the cry was heard at

night: "Let me out, let me out, for I'm deein' o' hunger"

Curious tales are related about "The Talking Dog," which guards treasure in the crypt of Dobb Park lodge in Warfedale. Horrible noises issue from the dungeon, but no one has ever dared to investigate them. Numerous are the spectre dogs, called "Gabriel's Hounds," the "Cwn Annwn;" and there are demon dogs supposed to chase old Tregeagle; and the dogs of the "Wild Huntsman." There is a phantom of a "wild horseman" who, with his hounds, haunts Oulton High house, in Suffolk. This is not the only apparition of this place, for a weird white lady is often seen.

Peel castle, Isle of Man, now an ivy-mantled ruin, was haunted by a peculiar spectre called the "Manthe or Mauthe Doog," a shaggy spaniel, mentioned in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. He was wont to come out of the dim corridors and to lie down by the open fire in the guardroom.

Cortachy castle, the seat of the Earl of Airlie, is haunted by the spirit of a drummer, the sound of whose drum betokens a death in the Ogilvie family. The tale is that a drummer was put to death by the first Lord Airlie, being thrust into his drum and thrown in it from the tower.

A spectre known as "Silky" long haunted Black Heddon, near Stamfordham, in Northumberland.

Another spirit named "Silky" haunts Denton Hall. Instances have occurred of visitors becoming so frightened that they would never return to Denton Hall, one of which was in the case of two sisters of Macready, the actor, who, after spending one night in the house, begged to be sent away, but would not reveal what had terrified them.

The famous spectre, Jemmy Lowther, known as the "bad Lord Lonsdale," the most coarse and cruel baron of the Conqueror's suite, became as great a horror after death as he had been in life. At Lowther Hall in Westmoreland his phantom coach and six are still remembered, and the hall became untenable on account of his ghostly pranks. At length his spirit was "laid" under a huge rock called "Willow Crag," which is pointed out to the tourist.

Hilton castle, in the north of England, is frequented by the spirit of a servant, Roger Skelton, who was murdered by his master, Robert Hilton, in 1609, because he did not bring his horse to the castle as promptly as he should have done. The infuriated lord of Hilton rushed to the stable, and seizing a pitchfork struck Skelton a blow which proved fatal. At night the poor victim was buried secretly in a neighboring pond, where his body was discovered many years afterward. His ghost, known as "The Cauld Lad of Hilton," haunted the castle but was never vindictive, for his pranks resemble those of Robin Goodfellow rather than the doings of a perturbed spirit. Like the household brownies, he is seldom seen, though he is heard in the servants' hall breaking plates and dishes, throwing everything into wild confusion, and helping himself to the richest cream in the dairy. This sprite was expelled at length by the presentation of a green cloak and hood, which was laid conveniently before the open fireplace in the kitchen. At twelve o'clock he appeared, donned the garments and frisked about until the first cockcrow, when off he darted, singing:

"Here's a cloak, and here's a hood,
The Cauld Lad o' Hilton will do no more good."



SIR JOHN THE LITTLE.



"TOTOKOMILA AND LISAYAE."

(See page 666.)



TOTOKOMILA AND LISAYAE. (A LOVE LEGEND OF YOSEMITE.)

BY JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

WHETHER skins be white or brown,
 Whether it be king or clown,
 In the wild or in the town,
 Love has power to topple down.

'Twas a chieftain ; glen to glade,
 Vale to hill, he sowed and swayed,
 Well belovèd, well obeyed—
 Peace to his unhappy shade !—
 Till he met the spirit-maid.
 Torrent falls of golden hair
 Down and round her shoulders bare,
 Wingèd like a moonlit cloud,
 Azure eyed and starry browed,
 On the dome out in the West—
 So the wild bird lights to rest—
 There she dropped, a vision blest.
 Just a little spirit-maid,
 But no more the chieftain swayed ;
 Limp his arm and dull his blade,
 And his kingdom slow decayed.
 In his gardens, once so fair,
 Cat-o-mountain made his lair ;
 Now a pard and now a bear—
 Noah's boat had not a pair
 But did romp and revel there.
 Something warned the spirit-maid,
 Back she flew and knelt and prayed :
 Lo, the grasses at her feet
 Quick pricked upward green and sweet.
 Fields and flowers, shrubs and trees,
 Spread their blossoms like the seas,
 Bears and pards turned birds and bees.
 Now the tribe—as well they might—
 Dancing all one happy night,
 Gave the name the spirit bore
 To the dome forever more.

"But, O sweetest Lisayae!
 Where's our chieftain? Call him back,
 Lest again we go to rack."
 Tender was her maiden's heart,
 Cunning was her maiden's art;
 Modestly she fled the dome,
 And that hour their lord came home—
 Home he came, but not to stay,
 Like a mist he slipped away.
 Just a little spirit-maid,
 But the havoc that she played!
 He must seek her low and high,
 He must find her or must die.
 All he left to tell his fate,
 Was the face above the gate—
 Was his face with hunting knife
 Cleanly carved there, to the life.
 Whether skins be white or brown,
 Love has power to topple down;
 If the spirit light the flame,
 Red or white, it's all the same.
 "Lisayae! Lisayae!" is the sigh,
 We must find her or must die.
 Fierce the fire that in him burned—
 Never more the chief returned,
 Old Yosemite's youthful brave
 Long is in his lover's grave;
 Under sun or under snow,
 Where it is no man does know;
 On his tribe the grasses grow,
 All are perished long ago.
 But the dome out in the West,
 Still it keeps the vision blest,
 And the face above the gate,
 Fixed upon the spirit mate,
 Still looks up, as courage will,
 Hapless, hopeless, loving still.





JUNE, 1993.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

"BUT if, as you assure me," said I, addressing the intelligent personage with whom I had been conversing, "this is indeed my native land of America, it seems to be strangely altered since last night. What, for instance, has become of the cities? I have been wandering about here for some time, and can see nothing but farm-houses of rather unpretending design, standing, each of them, in the midst of a ten-acre lot."

As I spoke, I felt a severe crick in my back.

My interlocutor smiled. "In what year, may I venture to ask, did you fall asleep?" he politely enquired.

"In what year?" I repeated. Why, the same year it is now, I presume—A. D. 1893. Why do you ask?"

"That explains a good deal, both for me and for you," was his reply. "We are now in the month of June, 1993, so your nap must have lasted a trifle over a century. I congratulate you."

"Your statement would probably have aroused my surprise, and perhaps even my incredulity," said I, "had I not during the last decade or two of the nineteenth century had occasion to read a number of books, all of whose authors had slept during periods of from ten to two hundred years. It is evident that the sympathetic drowsiness caused by their perusal has overcome me to a greater extent than I supposed. May I, without further apology, request you to enlighten me as to the nature of the changes that have taken place during my unconsciousness?"

"I applaud your aplomb, my dear sir," rejoined my companion, with a bow. "It has been my fortune to meet gentlemen in your predicament before, and a good deal of time has usually been consumed in the formality of convincing them that they were really so far ahead of their age as the facts showed them to be. You, I am gratified to see, are ready to start off at score. Would it be indiscreet to enquire whether you, like the rest, contemplate publishing the result of your investigations

in the periodicals of a century ago?"

"You have divined my purpose," answered I, with a blush. "The fact is, I had promised a certain editor, a friend of mine, to prepare for his magazine a story of what" —

"I comprehend," interposed my friend. "It will give me pleasure to enlighten you, and I shall make no charge for my services. At the same time, it would gratify me to know the name of the periodical in which" —

"With pleasure," said I; and I mentioned it. My interlocutor's face immediately brightened.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed; "is not that the same that first took up the topic of mechanical flight, and published a number of articles proving its feasibility?"

"The very same," replied I.

"The magazine in question is still in the apogee of its existence," he remarked, "and—as you perhaps are not aware—it had the honor of bringing out the first successful flying-machine. The world owes that magazine a debt never to be repaid; and I need scarcely say that anything I or any of us can do to meet the

wishes of its representative of the last century" — He ended with a courteous and cordial gesture that put me completely at my ease.

"Suppose, then," said I, "we begin with the disappearance of the cities. How about it? What happened to them?"

"By way of preparing your mind for a comprehension of that point," said my informant, "you must remember that, even in your day, business men had taken advantage of the facilities—such as they were—of rapid transit, to leave town at the close of business hours, and betake themselves to a dwelling in the suburbs, from ten to fifty miles outside of the city limits. In this way they secured a quiet night's rest and a breath of country air. Now, it is evident that the distance they went from town was dependent solely on the rate of speed at which the trains of that epoch were able to travel. When, therefore, flying-machines were introduced, with a velocity of from seventy-five to one hundred miles an hour, the business man's dwelling was removed to a corresponding distance, and regions were occupied which had till then been inaccessible. The environs of the great cities were extended to a comparatively vast radius; and in process of time cities were entirely given up to shops and man-

ufactories, and the great bulk of the population slept some hundreds of miles away from them. Every afternoon, flocks of flying-machines set out in all directions for the country; and since the fare, even to the most remote points, was hardly more than nominal, there were very few who failed to take advantage of the opportunity to escape."

"In short," commented I, "distance, within certain large limits, no longer existed?"

"Precisely! And



RARE CURIOS IN 1993.

now came the second step. It was found that the speed of flight rendered the existence of many large towns, comparatively close to one another, superfluous; and it was suggested that all the manufacturing and commercial interests of the nation should be concentrated in a certain limited number of places, the geographical situation of which should be fixed to suit the convenience of the majority. Surveys showed that not more than four of these great centers would be required, and sites were accordingly chosen, two on the sea-coast, east and west, and two in the interior. In no other part of the continent is there so much as a single village. Every family lives on its own lot of land, averaging about ten acres, and all the old crowding of people together is forever done away with. Each family consists of from five to ten members, who do all their own agricultural work, and make a good deal of their own drygoods and clothing."

"You surprise me," said I. "What time have they left to amuse themselves and cultivate their minds?"

"More than they ever had in the old times," was the reply. "You must make allowances for the spread of invention and discovery during the past century, and also for the greater simplicity of the general mode of life, to which I will refer presently. We have long since done away with servants, and with the laboring classes."

"That servants should have been extirpated does not astonish me," I said, "since I find the rest of the human race still in existence; and it was to be expected that the laboring classes would arrive at a point where the working hours would dwindle to nothing, and the pay increase to anything. But I confess I do find it a little incredible that ladies should have given up shopping; and yet that is the inference your words seem to warrant."

"I doubt if you will find a woman in the country who even knows what shopping means," returned the other confidently. "It all came about naturally. So long as people herded together in cities, in constant view of one another, the imitative instinct of humanity was constantly stimulated, and that strange form of insanity called fashion was in the

ascendant. But with the dispersal of the population, we began to act and think more independently, and each of us fell into the way of wearing such garments as suited us individually, instead of following an example set by some deformed or brainless man or woman in some remote part of the world. Though there is, broadly speaking, a certain uniformity in our male and female costumes, it is the result not of apish imitation, but of the gradual evolution of a dress which is proved to be hygienically and æsthetically the best. There is nothing more to it; and the change is due to the abolition of cities, which, again, is the consequence, as I have pointed out, of the invention of human flight. And as shopping was occasioned solely by the demands of fashion, you may now understand why our women know and care nothing about it."

"But what has become of the gregarious instincts of humanity?" I demanded. "I can understand that much is gained in the way of health and independence by your present system of life; but there is an electric sympathy in crowds, of which men, as well as women, are conscious. This ten-acre lot arrangement prevents that altogether, and must lead, I should suppose, to an ever-increasing dulness and lethargy, hostile to intellectual and ethical development. What becomes of music, eloquence, and the drama?"

"Your exception is well taken," said my companion. "Human beings do need the occasional excitement of one another's presence in large numbers; the heights of enthusiasm and conviction would be unattainable without it. At the same time, you must have observed that the habitual dwellers in cities were less sensitive to these stimuli than those who were comparatively unused to them. Habit breeds callousness. The nightly lounge at the theatre and the opera, the weekly crowd at church, the parade on the fashionable avenues, the annual thronging to summer watering places, these customs only rendered those who indulged in them insensible to the very benefits they were designed to confer. So, also, the endless series of dinners, receptions, balls and routs which dominated what was called society, had the final effect of only boring to death the partici-

pants in them. Yet they are, in themselves, excellent things; the trouble was, that owing to the heaping together of people in inextricable masses, they were carried to an unnatural and intolerable excess. Our new plan of existence has not annihilated the principle of human meetings; it has regulated and modified them, and thereby rendered them fully and invariably effective. In addition to the great business centers of which I have told you, there is an equal number of places whereon are built theatres, churches, museums, and great pleasure gardens and halls for amusement and for public meetings of all sorts. At these places, at stated intervals—five or six times a year—the people come together in vast numbers, for purposes of mutual entertainment, information and improvement. After a few days spent in this manner, they separate again, and disperse to their homes. In this manner they obtain the very best re-

sults of association, without running any risk of overdoing it. Of course, it is the flying-machine that makes such gatherings from all parts of the continent practicable."

"And don't the ladies wear bonnets at these gatherings?" I enquired, somewhat anxiously.

"No one now wears either hats or bonnets," replied my informant. "It was discovered about sixty years ago that the hair is a sufficient and natural covering for the head, and nothing else is worn by anyone."

"And where are your government headquarters, and your halls of congress?" I asked.

"Nothing of the kind has existed for



THE RELICS OF AN ANCIENT CITY.

many years," was the answer. "In the first place, the scattering of the population radically modified the character of the laws needed for our government; and the absence of municipalities and the difficulty of getting officers to carry out the behests of the law over so vast an extent of country, practically brought legislation to a standstill. But, on the other hand, it was soon discovered that laws were

short, it appeared that there was little or nothing, in the way of pains and penalties for the law to do. The separate and independent mode of life adopted by the people taught them how to take care of themselves, and to be just to one another; and the fact that immense improvements in the way of telegraphs and telephones had brought every individual of the nation into immediate and effortless communication with every other, gradually made the government of the people, by the people, for the people, a literal instead of merely a figurative truth. We are all under one another's moral supervision; a wrong done this morning at the spot on which we stand, for example would,

before sunset be known to every man and woman in America, and the wrongdoer would be henceforth marked. Matters of supreme public concern are still discussed, at need, at meetings of the delegates of the nation, and the results are disseminated over the continent, not as commands, but as counsel. Really, however, things mostly run themselves nowadays; insomuch that not more than once or twice in my lifetime has it been found necessary to call a consultation of the delegates."

"But how in case of war?" was my next question. "Is not the power and concentration afforded by cities severely missed in such emergencies? and are not meetings of the leading citizens then indispensable, to devise measures for defence and to raise armies?"

"If you will reflect for a moment, I think you will perceive that a war would be a difficult thing to start," said the man of the twentieth century, lifting one eyebrow with an arch expression. "Whom are we to fight against?"

"I don't refer to civil war, of course," said I, "but supposing you were attacked from the other side of the Atlantic?"

"The flying-machine is the universal peace-maker," answered he. "It is true that when it was first invented it was recognized as a most formidable war-



AN ACCIDENT IN MID-AIR.

scarcely necessary, and were becoming less so every year. The pauper class was rapidly diminishing—it is now non-existent—because land speculation had been put an end to, and the land was free to whomsoever desired to settle on and improve it. Crimes against property ceased; drunkenness died a natural death, owing to the lack of example and provocation which cities had supplied. Social vices diminished for the same reason; and, in

engine; and I believe that it was employed for that purpose, to some extent, before the close of your century. Battles were fought in the air, and bombs were dropped into cities; no doubt there was a general feeling of helplessness and insecurity. It was easy for a single machine to destroy billions of dollars worth of property and innumerable lives. But the consequence was, that the fighting soon came to an end. It is always governments, and never peoples, who quarrel; and the latter declined to assist in any further destruction. As soon as there was peace, there ensued a universal era of travel; everybody had his flying-machine, and there was a general interchange of visits all over the world. This continued for a dozen or twenty years. By that time, political geography had been practically obliterated. I am speaking now, of Europe; there was never any difficulty in this country. The nations made personal acquaintance with one another through the individuals composing them; free trade had already become universal, since it was found impracticable to maintain custom-houses in the sky. Many persons settled down in what had formerly been "foreign" countries; by and by, there were no longer any foreigners, things got so mixed up that distinct forms of government became, as I told you, impossible and inoperative. The old world became a huge, informal federation; and although Europe, Asia, Africa and Polynesia are still, in a sense, separate countries, it is only so far as they are geographically divided from one another. The inevitable consequence of this was the gradual adoption of a common language; and today the inhabitants of this planet are rapidly approximating to the state of a homogeneous people, all whose



social, political and commercial interests are identical. Owing to the unlimited facilities of intercommunication, they are almost as closely united as the members of a family; and you might travel round the globe, and find little in the life, manners, and even personal appearance of the inhabitants to remind you that you were remote from your own birthplace."

"Personal appearance!" I repeated. "Surely I should find some modifications in Africa or China, for example?"

"Perhaps, if you are an exceptionally keen ethnologist. Of what blood should you take me to be?"

I looked narrowly at my interlocutor. He was a man of little more than middle height, with a square, compact brow, and refined, finely moulded features. The face indicated a justly balanced nature, intellectual, yet not to such a degree as to overpower the emotional. His figure was powerful and active and his bearing graceful. In short, I had seldom seen so handsome and manly a man.

"You are a New Englander," said I, after due deliberation, "of English—I think of Welsh—descent."

He laughed heartily.

"My great-great-grandparents were unadulterated Esquimaux," he replied. "No, we are pretty well disguised even now, and in another hundred years we shall be quite indistinguishable. But it is only fair to admit that the crossing of the races alone is not sufficient to account for the similarity of type. A new element of vitality, a new spirit, has been infused into the human race; and a change has evidently taken place in the interior physical constitution of the dark races, causing them to tend both in form and hue towards the Caucasian standard. It would not be in our present line of discourse to explain to you the causes of this; but you must take into consideration the substantial unity of aim and feeling that now exists throughout the world, and remember that the body is formed by the soul, and is its material expression. But the alliance between physical and spiritual science had been scarcely completed in your day, I think; and these hints may therefore not have much significance for you."

"What you say is, nevertheless, interesting, and I doubt not it may be valuable," said I, with a bow. "Still, as you say,

we are here to talk about the consequences of the flying-machine. Now, after making all allowances for your unquestionable improvements and advantages, it still seems to me that life must be rather a dull affair in these last years of the twentieth century. What novelty or change is there to look forward to? What excitement, what uncertainty or peril have you to anticipate, to brace your nerves and rouse your souls withal? You will soon—if you have not already done so—come to a standstill; there will be nothing left to hope for—and not to hope is to despair. My apprehension would be that your civilization will presently begin to retrograde; the old passions and follies of mankind will revive; they will deliberately turn their backs on what you call good, and revert to what you call evil; and a century or two hence the world will be once more a barbarism, and the whole march of improvement will have to begin over again. And to tell you the truth, I would rather live in that age than take my place here now and never feel my pulse quicken at an unforeseen emergency, or strive for eminence, or dread disaster."

"And were our condition what you suppose, I should certainly make the choice that you do," replied my companion. "But you have jumped to conclusions which the facts do not support. The main difference between life now, and as it was in your day, is that ours is comparatively an interior, and therefore a more real and absorbing life. For the first time in history we have a real human society. You had the imitation—the symbol—but not the true thing itself. You will admit that in a perfectly free state man will inevitably select that environment and those companions with which he feels himself most in sympathy—where he finds himself most at home. Now, the power of flight, combined with the modification of the old political conditions that I have mentioned, gave to man this ability to live where and with whom he would. The perfect result could not be attained at once, as it might be in a purely spiritual state; but the tendency was present and the issue was only a question of time. By degrees, the individuals throughout the world who by mind and temperament were suited to one another, found one another out, and chose habitations where



A 1993 PLEASURE PARTY.

they might be readily accessible to one another. Thus, each family lives in the midst of a circle of families comprising those who are most nearly at one with it in sentiment and quality, and the intercourse of this group is mainly confined to itself. There is between them perfect and intimate friendship and confidence, and you will easily understand that they must realize the true ideal of society. There is no loss, no waste, no aimlessness in their communion; they are a constant stimulus and means of elevation to one another, and their advance in goodness and felicity is more rapid than you can perhaps realize; but you know how human peace and happiness can be retarded by the selfish opposition of every man against his brothers, and you may infer what a transformation would ensue upon a reversal of that attitude."

"I recognize your point; but there must still be a certain sort of monotony in this paradisiacal existence. Felicity is good as an occasional indulgence, but as a steady diet it is too relaxing. Mis-

fortunes, griefs and disappointments—we need them just as much as we need salt, and cold weather."

The twentieth century man shook his head and smiled. "Since, as I suppose, you are to return to your own historical epoch upon the conclusion of this interview," said he, "we may agree to differ, for the present, as to the objection you raise. But when you come back to us again for good, I think you will find our life to be not less arduous and full of vicissitudes than your own. This earth will never be quite heaven; there will always be struggle, uncertainty and incompleteness. Nor will you find these less poignant because the plane of activity is a more interior and vital one than you have yet known. As your perceptions become more acute, your emotions more sensitive, and your intellect more comprehensive—as your spirit, in short, learns to master your body—you will enter upon an experience compared with which the most stirring career of old times would seem tame and vulgar. But just as your dog or your horse could not be influenced or in-

spired by the things which mould and agitate your own life, so you—pardon me—are as yet incapable of appreciating the subtle but mighty forces that educate and purify us. This power of flight, on which our present civilization is conditioned, is, like other material phenomena, an emblem. We are lifted to a higher sphere, and thereby to a perception of truths to which the nineteenth century is as yet a stranger."

"It strikes me, sir," said I, "that you have intimated that I, and with me the friends and acquaintances whom I have temporarily left behind me in the year 1893, are little better than so many asses. I might brook the personal aspersion on

myself; but I can do no less than resent it on the part of those whom I have the honor to represent. I fail to see that further intercourse between us is desirable; but, in bidding you good-day, I may remark that I think a more modest attitude on your part would have been becoming; for you must admit that whatever you and your civilization are, is due to me—insomuch that if I had not had this dream you would have had no existence whatever. Yet I am willing to be lenient, and the only retaliation I shall permit myself for your discourtesy is simply to wake up and thereby relegate you to the nothingness out of which you have been evoked."

THE UNILLUMINED VERGE.—[TO A FRIEND DYING.]

BY ROBERT BRIDGES.

"On the dark decline of the unilluminated verge between the two worlds."—*George Meredith.*

THEY tell you that Death's at the turn of the road,
That under the shade of a cypress you'll find him,
And, struggling on wearily, lashed by the goad
Of pain, you will enter the black mist behind him.

I can walk with you up to the ridge of the hill,
And we'll talk of the way we have come through the valley;
Down below there a bird breaks into a trill,
And a groaning slave bends to the oar of his galley.

You are up on the heights now, you pity the slave—
"Poor soul, how fate lashes him on at his rowing!"
Yet it's joyful to live, and it's hard to be brave
When you watch the sun sink and the daylight is going."

We are almost there—our last walk on this height—
I must bid you good-bye at that cross on the mountain.
See the sun glow red, and the pulsating light
Fill the valley, and rise like the flood in a fountain!

And it shines in your face and illumines your soul;
We are comrades as ever, right here at your going;
You may rest if you will within sight of the goal,
While I must return to my oar and the rowing.

We must part now? Well, here is the hand of a friend;
I will keep you in sight till the road makes its turning
Just over the ridge within reach of the end
Of your arduous toil—the beginning of learning.

You will call to me once from the mist, on the verge,
"Au revoir!" and "good night!" while the twilight is creeping
Up luminous peaks, and the pale stars emerge?
Yes, I hear your faint voice: "This is rest, and like sleeping!"

THE DISAPPEARANCE SYNDICATE.

BY T. C. CRAWFORD.

LIFE is full of strange possibilities to those who keep their eyes wide open. Even to those who are blind there comes, at some turn in their existence, a flash of light. I have had a queer experience in my life, as it has thus far been lived, unlike anything I have ever heard of in any book or story. For a brief period I dwelt in a world more wonderful than any described in a tale of the Arabian Nights. How I came to lose this rare opportunity of living a life of light and knowledge, and how I have acquired the patience to follow again the humdrum of ordinary existence, may prove interesting. At any rate, I have firmly made up my mind to tell the story exactly as it occurred, with the hope that its recital will do some good to those who may care to read it through from its beginning to the end.

My name is Arthur Livingstone. I have been a writer upon social topics for many years. I read all the papers carefully, and am ever on the alert for out-of-the-way topics. At the time of the beginning of this story I had been much impressed by the number of peculiar disappearances throughout the world. These disappearances were nearly always those of men of wealth and prominence. There never appeared to be any special predisposing cause, so far as any surface clue might indicate.

In Paris, during the preceding summer, I had been attracted by an article in the *Petit Journal* upon the subject of mysterious disappearances throughout France. The French are the most curious people in the world, and when a man disappears in that country, there are generally any number of witnesses, who, by shrewd observation, are able to give the clue which leads to a rational explanation. But this article called attention to the curious fact that, out of the ten cases noted in France that year, each had been identical in char-



Drawn by F. O. Small.

HERE YOU ARE, SIR! MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE!

acter. There was no crime, nor scandal, as a predisposing cause. In each case the absent individual had been in prosperous circumstances, and in each case the disappearance had been absolute, no trace being found afterwards.

When I returned to New York, in the autumn, I took up the files of newspapers kept in the Mercantile library. I went carefully through the leading papers of the world for the year, looking for cases of mysterious disappearance. I found more than I could have anticipated, and found them, too, in every country where I made search. The record of London had reached, during the year, as high as twenty, and these really notable people. In Spain, there were five; in Italy, ten; in Austro-Hungary, five; in Germany, ten; in Russia, fifteen; in the north of Europe, fifteen, while the United States had contributed, in the same period, some twenty cases.

These cases were all alike, the world over. The people were always prominent, well-to-do, with no apparent reason for their "stepping out." The disappearances were always unforeseen. They were,

also, as complete as they were unexplainable. Here are two cases from my notebook of observations in the American papers. Case number one: A naval officer, in good standing at Washington, young, handsome, unmarried, leaves Fortress Munroe on an Old Dominion steamer for New York. His friends see him off, and observe that he is in unusually good spirits. The next morning he walks up the dock in New York, and steps out into the unknown. He has now been lost for one year. The utmost resources of the department and of his friends have not been able to produce a trace of his existence. Case number two: A high official in one of the government departments, who has a pleasant home and an agreeable family, leaves his office at mid-day, and says he will return in a half hour. He is seen upon Pennsylvania avenue, a short time afterwards, and then disappears. No apparent reason for his going away, however, has been found, while the world has been ransacked by detectives, to find out where he could have gone.

The latest case to attract my attention was the disappearance of a banker from the town of Winsted, Connecticut. He was rich, apparently happy, with a well-brought-up family. He had no bad habits known to anyone around him. He had come to New York upon a business visit, and had never been heard of afterwards. His accounts were found to be correct to a penny. There was no evidence of any love affair. He had simply stepped out into the unknown and had left no trace behind him.

One night, at the Critics' club, I talked over the disappearances noted by me with an old college-mate, Dr. Briggs, now headmaster of a large private school near Boston. He suggested, cynically: "You have evolved such a chain of disappearances throughout the world, that you have proved the necessity of some system behind it all. And a system argues a syndicate."

"A syndicate?"

"Certainly, a syndicate. Why not? The fact that only men well-to-do are taken shows the ear-marks of a great business enterprise. The further fact that the dishonest and the criminal are eliminated from their customers shows how carefully the thing is managed and how it

runs no risk of exposure or of coming to ruin through conflict with the law. I tell you, sir," and here the professor slapped the table, "there is, undoubtedly, somewhere in this world some great and overshadowing genius, who is the directing mind of a formidable syndicate created for the purpose of promoting disappearances. Oh, what would I not give to be able to see that man and talk with him!"

I must confess that I was a bit overwhelmed by the professor's explanation, and I could only feebly ejaculate, in response to his daring originality: "What you say is ridiculous!"

"Why ridiculous?" said the professor, sharply. "Would not such a syndicate make an appeal to the universal nomadic instinct? There are men with whom you touch elbows every day, who are outwardly cheerful, but who are bored to death—wearied with the routine of existence,—who would jump at an easy, ready-made path into another existence, to which they could escape without fear of bother, scandal, or of possible failure in arriving there. Why, I once knew a man who committed suicide because he got tired of getting up every morning and lacing his shoes! Then, the cost of the disappearance would cut no figure if the system were perfect. Clearly, this syndicate is under the direction of a master-mind! Why, he can point to his past record of last year and even charge a fee of one hundred thousand dollars to the weary, worn candidate, and be sure of getting it! I think he is wise in keeping the number limited and the price high. I would give a good deal to meet the president of The Disappearance Syndicate?"

"But, professor, why do you go so fast? Why do you treat your ingenious surmise as such an indisputable fact?"

"Simply because a syndicate is the only explanation. Without large capital and a perfect system, the disappearances noted by you, which are so uniform in character, could not have been possible. Large capital and a system are, naturally, the product of a well-organized syndicate, and the successful syndicate has always back of it the man—the dictator—who makes things go."

I confess the professor's idea interested me. I was certain that it would, at least, make a good article for one of the Sunday

papers. As I followed the thread of my friend's whimsical idea, I naturally turned in the direction of a possible candidate for the mythical syndicate. I found him in my old friend, James Musgrove, banker and broker, whose New York house had London and Paris branches. It was in Paris that I first knew him. It was through his house that I had cashed the small drafts that came to me, at fitful intervals, as compensation for stray newspaper letters. Musgrove was rich and tired of everything. He had been a bold speculator all his life, and I knew that anything really new would divert him more than any other man of my acquaintance.

I made up my mind to call upon him and discuss the disappearance syndicate theory, merely to listen to the flow of his cynical talk. The Winsted banker had been one of his customers, and as the papers were still full of the case, it gave me a good excuse for calling upon him.

I found the banker seated in the private room reserved for customers. At that time, he was in the neighborhood of sixty years of age. He sat in a stuffed leather chair, with huge gold-mounted eye-glasses fitted up against his eager dark eyes. For upwards of forty years he had been tossing about upon the raging sea of speculation. Originally a farmer's boy in central New York, he acquired in youth a stock of health and vitality that had stood him splendid service during his life. He was slightly above the medium height, with a round and heavy figure. He always dressed in black. His coat was a loose, unbuttoned frock; his waistcoat was cut low enough to show a good expanse of white shirt, upon which gleamed a large diamond. His neck was encircled by a high standing-collar; his black cravat was tied in the form of a double bow at his throat. His trousers

were cut as wide as a sailor's; his boots were broad, low-heeled and highly polished. His hat, worn in and out of doors, summer and winter, was, nine months of the year, a high silk; for three months in the summer it was a coarse, high-crowned straw. His face was round, olive-tinted, heavy-featured and thick-skinned. His nose was a wide-flaring pug. His mouth was large and thick-lipped; in the days when he was an active broker, engaged on the floor of the Stock Exchange, when opened, it gave forth the roar of a bull or the growl of a bear, according to the side he was engaged upon, in tones only too realistic. His teeth were firm and even, indicating a sound digestion, while his dark, close-

cropped and curling hair—slightly thinning now towards the crown—showed only traces of silver-gray. When I came in, he sat in his favorite attitude, with his fat hands clasped over his round stomach, as he gazed, with the intensity of an artist, upon the figures which a lean and hungry boy was continually marking up on the walls of a blackboard, which covered the two sides of the room, the register of the stock quotations of the world.



HUNTING UP CASES.

There was a great table in the center of the room, littered with financial reports, and newspapers; a clock-work machine—the "ticker"—monotonously turning, printing stock quotations on rapidly unwinding lengths of white tape, stood in one corner. The hieroglyphics printed by the machine are read from moment to moment, from ten A.M. to three P.M., all over the world, by grave groups, who scan the register of the day's proceedings with the same seriousness that people used to accord to the utterances of the Delphic oracle. About the room were the customers who watched the figures on the wall with the manner of professional gamblers studying the movements of the

hands of the croupiers at Monte Carlo. The whole floor of the building was given up to the offices of J. Musgrove & Company. It was divided off into little, compact pens, each lighted by incandescent electric lights. The great window looking into Wall street was filled with sheets of money, bonds, ingots, and with the gold of all nations; next to this array of money stood a small army of bookkeepers, who toiled, like convicts in the galleys, at long columns of figures, not daring to look up during the rush of business hours. In other pens were typewriters, telegraph operators, private secretaries, associate and special partners.

There were also a number of special pens for private conversation, where nervous customers could be taken in quietly and soothed when the market was going against them, and where they could be bravely patted on the back, and praised for their courage, and told to go in and win when the market was going their way. In some of these little pens strong men had broken down and shed tears at the thought of the fortune that had been taken from them through the mutations of the remorseless ticker.

Here they came, old and young, to try their fortune, to bet boldly or timidly, according to their natures, upon the direction in which the erratic market would jump. Musgrove always told everybody to keep away, and when a new customer came to him, he invariably said: "Don't you try stocks!" It was observed that the customers were never so anxious to try as when Musgrove advised them to keep away. The man who wishes to burn his fingers was never yet deterred by anything in the form of advice; and so, when the hollow-eyed customer came up to settle at the cashier's office, and sometimes totter away to penury and despair, it was an edifying spectacle to watch James Musgrove, as he stood rattling his customer's commissions in the deep pockets of his wide trousers, while he called out after him, in good-natured accents: "Remember, I told you to keep away!" And his "Better luck next time!" was a miracle of art, because it was this hope of the next time that brought each one back as soon as he could scrape together the wherewithal to cover the margins necessary to

play again, the beautiful game of betting what the uncertain movement of the stock quotation machine would grind out next.

Musgrove looked at me carelessly, as I came in, and then, having nothing very much to do for the moment, he began to give me his views concerning the condition of affairs in the country, which was his way of being agreeable. After he had described the different conditions of the various railroads of the country, and the effect upon the market of this and that influence, he walked into another private room, where I followed him. In the midst of his talk I finally interjected this question: "Did you know this Winsted banker, who disappeared the other day?"

Musgrove darted a sharp look at me, and said: "Why do you ask that? I have told over and over again, in the newspapers, for the last ten days, all that I know about him—and more, too."

"What I want to know, is: Did you have intimate relations with him?"

Musgrove was no longer responsive. "I knew him as I knew hundreds of others, and he used to come in here very often. He was a good customer."

I ventured to add that I was very much interested in the case, and I was curious to observe that Musgrove did not like to be questioned concerning the Connecticut man. I finally said: "I'm interested in all cases of this kind. My interest is only general."

I fancied, when I said this, that Musgrove looked slightly relieved. He was looking at me, all through this conversation, with that old, hard and curious look that I used to see when he thought I was on the verge of bringing up some question of money. This look of hardness was soon followed by such a look of indifference that I was repelled. I did not reach a point in the conversation where it would have been natural for me to have introduced the syndicate theory. It takes a born fool, or a diplomat of the first water, to take up an utterly foreign subject, and drag it neck and heels into such a conversation, without some kind of prelude.

I never observed Musgrove so closely as I did upon this particular occasion. Some inner instinct of the detective cautioned me to scrutinize his every feature, as I had never observed him before. Ev-

ery detail of his characteristic face was rephotographed with remarkable distinctness upon my mind. I observed that under his left eye there were three little, blue powder-marks, the result of an accident in childhood. Behind his right ear was a small mole, in the shape of an egg. His hands were made the subject of my most minute attention. The left hand had a slight scar, running from the upper knuckle to the middle of the hand. This was the only characteristic mark, outside of their intensely individual form. They were very short and covered with the hair of a vigorous type of man; the nails were flat, cut very short and even with the ends of the fingers, giving the hands a very blunt appearance.

My sharp scrutiny appeared to make him nervous. He said, brusquely: "What in the devil are you looking at me that way for?"

I made some explanation about being absent-minded and got up to take my leave, as he was evidently anxious either to be alone, or to take up some other subject of more interest to him than the conversation of the casual caller.

When I rose to go, his old heartiness of manner came back. He got up with a rush, shook me by the hand warmly, and invited me to drop in and see him at the Colossus club that evening, after dinner. "This shop, down here," said he, "is really no place for a talk. I've got some literary ideas I want to suggest to you. I think you are really getting careless in your style, and the subjects you have been writing about lately are not new. You're losing your originality, my boy." This kind of remark was not new to me. It was a part of the engaging manner often employed by business men, to endear themselves to their literary friends.

I left Mr. Musgrove's office at three o'clock. The next morning all the papers published, with great detail, a story of the disappearance of James Musgrove. This brought the subject of mysterious disappearances very close home. I will not give the details of the many stories circulated about Musgrove's disappearance. No two of the theories published agreed, and no clue was then found showing what had become of him after leaving his banking-house on the day of my call.

The sensation created by the disappear-

ance of James Musgrove was very great. He was one of the pillars of the Stock Exchange. His absence made a run on his bank. Rumors of a large defalcation were put in active circulation. All the stocks of the enterprises in which the house had been interested were freely sold by the bears, who made so much noise and excitement by their sale of these securities that they nearly created a panic on the Exchange. They soon found the missing banker had left his house in an absolutely sound condition. Every obligation presented was promptly met. Musgrove had withdrawn nothing from the firm which did not personally belong to him. His accounts were found to be in perfect condition. The reserve was ample for every need, showing that the banker's absence, if continued, would not, of necessity, force the winding up of the affairs of the concern.

The public interest in his disappearance was greatly increased when it was found that there was no apparent reason for his going away. The attention of the public had been lightly stirred by the story of the disappearance of the Winsted banker. The disappearance of so prominent a New York banker, in an equally mysterious and unexplainable way, fanned the curiosity of the easily inflamed New York public to a high pitch of excitement. The newspapers increased this by inventing various kinds of impossible stories, ranging from scandal to crime. One particular newspaper, noted for leading all others in its audacity of inventions, pretended to have discovered the plan of a society formed for the secret assassination of bankers and people of wealth. I was made the subject of a good deal of attention because an article of mine on mysterious disappearances throughout the world, had appeared during the week, in the *Illustrated Journal of Civilization*. Of course, I took advantage of the situation in the market to sell my wares. However, I made no reference in the article to my personal knowledge of Musgrove. If the article had been published during an ordinary period, it would not have attracted more than casual notice. Now it gave me, temporarily, great notoriety. This notoriety brought me within the visual horizon of the editor of *The Daily Wasp*.



Drawn by J. O. Small.

"CERTAINLY A SYNDICATE. WHY NOT?"

A reporter of this newspaper called upon me, one evening, at my club, and said the editor wished to see me. As I had never seen him, I was only too glad to accept the invitation and to say that I would call at his private office at twelve o'clock on the following day. I correctly supposed that he had been attracted by my notoriety, the only qualification necessary in his eyes to make a successful writer for a newspaper. The latest criminal and the freshest subject of some hideous scandal are considered today more valuable contributors, when writing over their own signatures, than the ablest professional writers. In this the modern editor shows his financial genius. An article on parental affection, by a young man who had murdered his mother because she would not lend him money for drink, had recently sent the circulation of *The Wasp* up several thousand. Its editor said, over and over again, that no member of the editorial staff had ever written an article that had ever given the paper such an upward bound in circula-

tion as this filial article which bore the address of Sing Sing.

I was prompt in my appointment, and found the editor in a room fitted up with some attempt at luxury and taste, although I observed, on my way to it, that the small rooms set aside for the use of the writers were rather bare of furnishings or adornment. It is not my present intention, however, to try and describe the interior of this newspaper office.

When I entered the editor's office, he was giving final instructions to a reporter, for the presiding genius of this paper interfered with every department, and called it supervision. He was sending this reporter out to interview a widowed mother whose only son had just been arrested for some crime.

"Be sure and see the mother," roared he, "and describe, in detail, her agony. Count her tears and give a general idea of their size. Such descriptions are greatly relished by the public. If she does not break down in your presence—and people have a strange way of control-

ling themselves when in the presence of my reporters,—then you can denounce her for her indifference and coldness. Be sure and make it spicy, and if you can put a touch of humor here and there to lighten the thing, don't fail. Now, go!"

I shall never forget the hungry look that came upon his face when he turned and motioned me to a seat near his desk. His eyes appeared to be pointed like gimlets, and as if seeking to bore themselves into my brain and draw out something to make palpitating copy. He said, abruptly:

"I have read your article on the mysterious disappearances throughout the world. It shows great originality and study. I have an idea that you did not put all you knew, or surmised, into that article."

"No, I did not."

At this, the editor bounded from his chair with excitement. No foxhound could bay louder than he, when upon the faintest trail of sensational copy. He now looked at me most admiringly. His commercial instincts approved the idea of writing part, and holding back the most valuable portion, to be sold upon a rising market. My reasons, however, had not been commercial. The editor's questions were now as abrupt as so many pistol shots.

"Have you any real news about Musgrove?"

"No."

"What are you holding back?"

"A good story."

"A news story?"

"No, not exactly, but a possible explanation; at least, an original idea concerning it."

"My God! An original idea?"

"Yes, I am sure of its originality."

At this, he abruptly rang a bell and sent out word that he was not to be disturbed under any circumstances. He then turned to me, with great nervous anxiety, and said:

"If you have an original idea, I want to buy it. An original idea is worth money. I boil the brains of the men in this office daily as I would so much soap-fat, searching for an original idea. Men break down, sometimes die, and sometimes are discharged, under my brain-squeezing process of searching for new ideas. I of-

fer premiums for their discovery, and discharge for their failure. Sometimes we are successful, and have a nice crop of really good ideas. But an original one—a wholly original one—we never had." Here the editor towered above me, brandishing a check-book, as he fairly howled: "Don't deceive me! Out with it! If it is original, I will pay any reasonable sum for it!"

"To speak the honest truth," said I, "the idea is not original with me."

"That does not matter. Have you got it with you?"

This treatment of an idea as an article of merchandise made a profound impression upon me. It was, after all, my friend's idea. I believed he was entitled to some consideration, if this idea was to be treated as a property. I said something like this; but the editor waved aside the suggestion as trivial—as if I were trying to evade his desire. My reticence stimulated him. He said:

"Tell me really what the whole idea is, and, if it is original, I'll give you five thousand dollars for it. Then there may be some business to follow."

Upon this assurance, which quite took my breath away with its magnificence, I outlined the idea of a disappearance syndicate. The editor was in raptures.

"I call that an original idea, at last," said he. "If I'd had that, I'd have gotten ten thousand dollars for it. I don't grudge you the price."

Here he tore open his check-book and wrote out a check for five thousand dollars, with an air of one to whom money was nothing. Then, when I told him how intimate I had been with Musgrove, and how I had, by chance, studied him upon the very day of his departure and could identify him under any disguise, he went into further raptures.

"I believe you can run down Musgrove. You know him. Try it. The story of a disappearance syndicate should be worked up with great detail, and should come from the other side of the water, to give it pith and point. Of course, it is absurdly impossible, and will, for that reason, be all the more readily believed. You should go to London at once. It would be well to visit Berlin and Paris, also. Musgrove is bound to be in some of his old haunts in Europe. Employ the

French and London police. Spend money freely. If you find Musgrove, use the cable; if you don't, elaborate the disappearance syndicate story. Make a twenty-column story. Articles in my paper are judged entirely by their length, the only test of true merit. Send it over by mail, and we'll mark it 'Special cable.' How soon can you go?"

"Right away."

"You have no special preparations to make?"

"None."

"I like that." Here the editor picked up a speaking-tube, marked "Cashier," and called out: "Send me up one hundred pounds, English money. When is the next European steamer?"

"The City of New York sails at three this afternoon," came back through the tube.

In a few moments, up came a package of crisp English bank-notes. I had soon the value of my check in my inside pocket. It had been changed to a draft on London. It was now two o'clock. The cab was called. I had still a few moments, as it was not over a twenty minutes' drive to the City of New York's pier. So, as I turned to go, the editor said:

"Try hard to think of a new idea on your way over, and cable it from Queens-town. Think of all the time you'll have, going over." This last was said with an air of intense regret; his mind was poisoned by the thought that for at least five days I would be out of his reach, where he could not ply me with questions.

As I rose to go, he still devoured me with his hungry, unhappy gaze, as if he were in doubt whether he had gotten all he could out of me. He had no doubt concerning the correctness of his investment. In such bargains his genius never wavered when he had once marked out a course. He said, after a moment's thought:

"I'll send two reporters down with you to the steamer. You might have an idea on your way down, and I'll direct the city editor to put a basket of carrier-pigeons on the cab. You may have an idea on the way out through the Narrows, and if you have, you can send it back by them. Now, good-by, and do your best!"

Up to this time he had acted with the force and rapidity of a great man of af-

fairs. There had been no feebleness nor hesitation. Now he looked almost pathetic. His investment was about to move out of range of communication.

"Cable me the moment you arrive," said he. "Send a cable address as soon as you get to London. Report something every night."

At last I got away. It was now half past two. I dashed into the waiting cab, with two reporters at my heels. The fire and fury of the editorial director yet stimulated the pulsations of my heart, which throbbed with comfortable rapidity against the book containing the five-thousand-dollar draft. In the fire and force of his intense, dominating individuality, I had overlooked all else; and now, I, caught in the clutches of *The Wasp*, was suddenly being fired, as from a catapult, towards Europe, without any previous thought or preparation. But the dominating thought was that, at last, I was authorized and financially backed for the purpose of investigating my favorite subject—a mystery. To hunt for James Musgrove was a fascinating task, and I shouted words of encouragement to the cab-driver, as he lashed his horse down the side streets, over the rough pavement and boxes and garbage of lower New York, deftly dodging street blockades, until we reached the dock, just as they were beginning to haul in the gangways to the steamer.

I mounted the last gangway, breathless and perspiring, just as it was beginning to move in. I waved my hat to the reporters, who cheered me as they cried: "We will tell the old man you made it."

Five minutes later the City of New York cast loose her moorings and was towed out into the stream. Fifteen minutes later she was turned about and was running free down the Narrows under the blazing sun of an early June afternoon.

Eight days after I was in London. From now on I moved in the atmosphere of turmoil and unrest of those who serve, even for the shortest time, a daily newspaper. Cablegrams came to me at all hours of the night, at my lodgings in Half-Moon street. Whenever I thought I had, by some long and toilsome day, earned the right to have a good rest, "Bang!" would go the knocker, and in

would come a buttoned boy with a blue-lined cablegram, covered with frenzied words, asking for the latest news. The night I arrived in London, before I had fairly entered my room, a cablegram came to me, asking how my search was coming on. This feverish intensity of pursuit made me at times wild. My peace of life was now gone; but I could not go back. I had taken a fee, and had made the engagement to try and perform a certain task. Then my own curiosity was a powerful stimulant. I made no attempt to call in the aid of the police. I knew that the best police of Europe had been already engaged by the private inquiries of the Musgrove family.

I knew that Musgrove was very fond of London, and that, when he lived in Paris, he had a frequent habit of coming over to the English capital, upon some financial pretext. In my occasional visits to London I had repeatedly met him. His habit, when there, was to occupy himself with financial affairs down in the City during the day, while, when evening came, he was nearly always to be found in some music-hall, with a group of lively friends, usually winding up with a supper at the Hotel Continental. He could not go about in any of his old haunts of London without being observed by some of his former friends. But, from sporting

companion to the liveliest and shrewdest of the barmaids, I could find no word of him. He had not been seen. He was remembered, because he had spent his money so freely and was such a consumer of champagne.

I searched carefully through the leading cities in Europe for six months, coming back, from time to time, to London. I was an humble, but observant member of the various sporting circles, where membership is not difficult and where Musgrove had been so prominent; but I found nothing remotely bearing upon my search. It was clear that I was to find nothing in London; but, if he was not there, where could he have gone? His inability to speak the French language in a manner even approaching ease or correctness, would have made his concealment in Paris as difficult as in a small village, so limited is the English-speaking colony there, and so closely is it observed by the curious French. Musgrove could hardly appear in Paris without being noted by the French police, so well was he known to them through his previous life in that city. I knew that he hated small towns and would as soon think of committing suicide as to bury himself in any rural obscurity. As I knew him, he would be wretched off the pavement of a great capital, and could only find perfect rest in a whirl of excitement. If he was not to be unearthed in London, then it was evident that he had not gone away of his own free will, or had found some new center of interest, outside of the calculations which I could make, based upon my previous knowledge of him.

I will pass over the violent letters and cablegrams which I constantly received from *The Wasp*, and keep, as near as I can, to the thread of my narrative relating to my search.

Six months after my arrival in London I made a valuable acquaintance. I had been for some time a member of the Victoria Gallery club, where the leading men of society, politics, art, literature, and, in fact, of every walk of intellectual life, met on Sunday evenings during the social season. The hall where the club-meetings were held was a large one, used for the display of the pictures of a great society of modern painters. This hall was brilliantly lighted and adorned with



*Drawn by
F. O. Small.*

"WHY DO YOU ASK THAT?"

some of the best and noblest examples of modern art. During the meetings of the club, refreshments were served in this room, and opportunities given for intimate conversation. A small stage was always brought in for the Sunday evening gatherings. Upon this stage there came, by invitation, the leading personages of the higher amusement world of London. About the hall were numerous small tables and easy-chairs, and cigars and drinks of all kinds were served by grave and decorous waiters. The guests wore evening dress, this requirement being imperative. Upwards of two hundred members were always to be found at these gatherings, and at times the attendance would be nearly doubled, if some unusual lion was to appear. No one was obliged to listen to the slight and irregular programme offered on the stage. Those who were not interested generally withdrew to the side rooms, but, as the entertainment always embraced the striking features of what was interesting London that week, the audience chamber was generally well filled.

But, to my new acquaintance. He was Lord Robert Melrose, the youngest son of the Duke of Wex. Melrose's title was a courtesy one, and several lives stood between him and the succession. I met him at Warwick, where I had gone for two days' rest from London, late in December. He was seated near me, the evening after my arrival in the coffee-room of the Warwick Arms, and we fell into conversation together. He was in the neighborhood of thirty years of age. He was a fresh-colored blonde, with a smooth-shaven face and close-cropped hair. He had travelled enough, as I found later, to wear away some of the prejudices of the average Briton. He had a pleasant voice, a quiet manner, and an insatiable curiosity concerning out-of-the-way things, which soon proved a bond between us.

We returned to London together, and on our way back I told him about my search for Musgrove, and asked him what he thought of the theory of a disappearance syndicate.

"I have travelled too much, and have seen too many surprising things, to regard anything as impossible or really improbable," he replied. "I would not have you think me foolishly credulous.

I simply avoid belief or disbelief, when an incident occurs or a theory comes up, until I can have sufficient facts to warrant a judgment. I am sure I can find out if your friend Musgrove is in London. Have you anything that formerly belonged to him? any picture?"

"No, I have no picture. I left New York too suddenly to go through my personal effects. I may have had there some scrap of his handwriting."

"Well, if he is in London, I can find him for you."

At the time, I asked for no explanation of this positive assurance, as we were just arriving at the Paddington station. Lord Robert drove with me to my lodgings, where he took a bed-room opening into my sitting-room, which we agreed to share in common. We returned upon a Sunday afternoon. That evening, after dining very well and very late, at the Café Royal, we walked up Regent street and then followed the cross-street which leads across Bond street to the Victoria gallery.

We arrived at the hour of midnight. It was the beginning of the evening so far as the entertainment was concerned. As we took a small table near the stage and ordered the usual brandy and soda, with dry cigars and Egyptian cigarettes, Madame Flora, the prima donna of the Drury Lane theater, was just finishing an aria in a style as brilliant as she was beautiful. As she swept off the stage, escorted by an attentive member of the committee on entertainment, there was the usual wait and idle conversation.

"I think the next number will interest you," said Lord Robert with significant meaning. He then added, "You have been so busy in hunting your hobby that you may not have heard of the latest London lion, Mortimer Mortimer."

"Who is Mortimer Mortimer?"

"That's what everybody asks."

"What is he, a circus manager, poet, escaped assassin, reformer, or a philanthropist?"

"You'll see him on the stage in a few moments, and when he's gone I'll ask you what you yourself think. He has made polite London fairly mad, although he is seen in only the greatest and most exclusive houses. My friend here at my left, saw him at the Duke of Devonshire's the other night and he can talk of nothing



*Drawn by
F. O. Small*

"MADAME FLORA WAS JUST FINISHING AN ARIA."

else. Ah, there he is, if I can judge correctly by the attention of my friend. Yes, he nods to my silent question. It is he."

I now turned to the stage which was only raised about two feet above the floor of the hall. It was bare of all theatrical paraphernalia. The only articles of furniture were a few chairs and a small table upon which stood a vase of roses.

The room was filled with the representative gentlemen of England.

The clear light of the hall revealed the intellectual faces of the leaders of men in one of the most refined societies in the great capital of the civilized world. It was an audience not to be trifled with, as its disapproval would have been sufficient to ruin the most ambitious social lion.

There was never a printed programme of the exercises on this stage. You were supposed to know all about the people who appeared. Explanations or introductions were never made.

As I looked at the stage, there stepped upon it a man of medium height, who came to the front of the platform with an ease and composure that commended him at once to the favorable attention of his audience. He appeared to be in middle life, but to have no particular age. His figure was slight; his face was brown in color, very clear and regular in its features and smooth shaven. His hair was straight and dark, cut to a medium length and parted exactly in the center from his very broad full forehead. His eyes were in-

tensely black, penetrating and gleaming with a steely light. His hands were lean, long and indicative of great nervous force. There was a look of calmness and power upon his face.

He came swiftly to the front of the stage and, with his hands locked before him, gazed calmly at the audience for several moments without speaking. His evening dress bore no sign of ornament. No jewel of the tiniest character showed in his snowy linen. The white cravat at his throat accentuated the dark color of his stern-lined face. As he looked intently at his audience, made up of cynical men of the world, the most difficult of all to impress by any ordinary means, while they are at the same time extremely responsive to the evidences of actual power, he soon demonstrated his right to be considered a leader. Before he had said one word, the audience fairly thrilled with expectation, and the hall was strangely silent. Here and there blue clouds of smoke puffed by nervous smokers curled and eddied upwards in the shining glare of the electric lights.

The occupant of the stage, who came in alone and unannounced, understood his audience. He made no gesture and no change even of attitude as he began to talk. His voice was low-keyed, serious in its accents, and so carefully modulated that every syllable was heard throughout the room, although he never departed from the conversational tone and carefully avoided all oratorical phrasing.

As near as I can remember, he said: "I am here this evening through the kind invitation of your entertainment committee. I wish to talk to you about the natural, although some accuse me of dealing with the supernatural. I will make one experiment to illustrate an idea and then I will have the honor of bidding you good-night. I assume that I will have, during the few moments that I am here, your undivided attention, and I trust that when I reach the point where the experiment is to be made, that no word or sound will be uttered. I make this request solely in the interest of the success of the experiment."

If possible, the attention of the audience deepened. There was a tension in the regard concentrated upon the speaker that was dangerous. If anything ordinary

were now to follow, he would simply become an object of polite ridicule.

The speaker now continued: "You are, of course, aware of all that modern science has done in defining some of the primary possibilities of animal magnetism. I will allude to one only of the recent experiments in Paris of the great Dr. Charcot. You doubtless have heard of his celebrated sensitive, Léonie. The learned doctor in his notes upon this case calls attention to the fact that in Léonie there have been developed three separate sub-consciousnesses, each distinct, individual and critical of the other. Now, it is among the possibilities of this science that the sub-consciousness that is the best in one, may by cultivation be made more prominent and be given permanent control. Who is there who really knows himself? Who is satisfied with what he is doing? What is it that directs our thoughts so often to other fields of occupation? Is it not the shadow of some subdued sub-consciousness seeking supremacy? But I have no idea of making an address upon the subtleties of this question. I will simply content myself with making an experiment which will show you the advancement that the science of animal magnetism has made. I do this for the purpose of impressing upon you the importance of the power that can be awakened by one who has given the subject some attention and has been fortunate enough to have reached results which appear only to the ignorant as supernatural." Here the speaker paused a moment, and then in the same quiet key, but with an increasing gravity of manner, continued:

"I believe no one, however perfect an adept in hypnotism, has ever assumed to put into the magnetic sleep or under the magnetic influence, more than one subject at a time. Now, I shall within the next five minutes establish such relations with this assembly as to make all here present see something I wish them to see and to hear something that I wish them to hear. In a word, while you will not pass into the magnetic sleep—which is one of the lowest forms of the evidences of the power of hypnotism,—you will, however, surrender your will for the moment utterly to mine. I shall ask you not to speak or move for thirty seconds to follow."

There was no sound of dissent. Every one present desired perfectly fair play and the simple condition demanded was conceded as a matter of course.

The speaker now waved his right hand and disclosed a shining ball about the size of an Italian orange. It was too large to be a jewel, while it was translucent and reflected light with the brilliancy of a diamond. Mortimer stepped back one step and held the ball above his head. His voice now became more measured and took on the chanting tone of a priest reading the ritual. "Look on this ball and study its shining beauties," said he. The ball glowed with a mystic fire, as every other light in the room was dimmed. In a second a great cloud of darkness swept through the room with a faint odor of incense following in its wake. "Listen to the music," now chanted the voice, which had an impersonal sound. It seemed at this moment to come direct from the center of the moving cloud of darkness. As the voice became silent, the distant notes of a great organ were heard, then a far-away chorus of pure voices chanting a lofty hymn of praise. This continued for a moment and then there was silence. The clouds cleared, the lights came back and the normal conditions of the hall were restored. As the darkness lifted, the brilliancy of the ball held in Mortimer's hands faded until the clear translucence was gone and it became a dark, dull, unreflecting globe.

Mortimer now thanked the audience for its attention and its civility in complying with his condition.

"You have," said he, "just had a proof of the hypnotic power in its highest form. This entire audience was for a moment under the influence of will power. You were all made to see light in a ball of dense, non-luminous carbon. The lights in the hall went out to your eyes, although they were bright and shining all the time. You heard music because it was willed that you should. It was all a deception of your senses through the control of your imagination."

Mortimer was about to bow and retire, when the Duke of Wex rose in the audience and begged permission to ask one question of the occupant of the stage before his departure. The duke was a tall, gallant looking gentleman with

resolute, aquiline features and a smoothly shaven face, surmounted by a thick mass of closely cropped white hair. His voice was pleasant and even, while his manner in addressing Mortimer was the perfection of civility. He said: "I, for one, have been profoundly interested in what you have said and done, but in the interests of the experiment itself will you permit a committee to examine the ball you have in your hand?"

There was a decided stir in the audience at this pointed request, but Mortimer was not at all disturbed by it. He replied: "There is no necessity for a formal committee. If you will come forward to the stage I will place the ball in your hands, and with your assistance make one more experiment which may prove as interesting to you as the one just made. It is needless to repeat that I shall require the same conditions—attention and silence."

There was again the same profound attention when the Duke of Wex stepped upon the stage. As he faced Mortimer, the latter said, before handing over the ball for inspection:

"There is a curious property about this ball. When it is in your hand I shall become invisible to you, though visible to the audience, so please make your personal inspection of it as it lies in my hand and before I hand it to you."

The strangest thing about this new situation was that no one of us now questioned Mortimer's ability to do what he proposed. Neither was there any surprise manifested. The duke adjusted his eyeglasses and advanced toward Mortimer and bent over the ball. As he looked intently at it, Mortimer said to him:

"Will you kindly report to the audience its appearance?"

At this request the duke appeared to be puzzled. He said:

"As I look at the ball I observe that it has again become translucent, filled with light and if it were a diamond it could not be purer and more beautiful. As I look at it I am conscious of a feeling of keen pleasure; its perfection is so complete, if one can use an adjective in connection with such a word. More than this, there appears to be an interior life underneath the forms of light. The ball seems to be the orb of something living. Ah, I now see a vista of distant mountains; a

change has come; it is as if I were gazing through the reverse end of a telescope; what! gentlemen, I give you my word of honor, I am now looking upon a reduced picture of my place in Scotland."

To all else in the room the ball had not changed, while it was clear that the duke simply saw what Mortimer willed him to see. The latter now handed the ball to the duke. Instantly there was a look of almost agonized surprise on the nobleman's face, as he stood staring at Mortimer, as if at vacancy.

"It is true," said he, "that with the ball in my hand Mr. Mortimer has gone." Then he exclaimed: "The ball is no longer clear. It is black, dense and dull and has the appearance of being a globe of pure carbon."

The scene lasted but half a moment, when Mortimer stepped up quietly and took back the ball, thrusting it in one of his pockets. The duke appeared to be under the influence of some great excitement. He advanced to Mortimer and had a low hurried word with him and then he returned to his seat in the hall where he sat down buried in a profound study. There was no demonstration or applause of any sort; but when Mortimer bowed and retired there was a low buzz of conversation, showing that the last number of the programme had had the unusual success of becoming the prevailing topic of conversation in one of the least curious circles in London.

As we walked home about half past one in the morning, Lord Robert said to me:

"I think I have found out something that draws nearer to your disappearance syndicate. I will give you one surmise and that is that Mortimer Mortimer could possibly tell you where you could find James Musgrove."

When I arrived at our lodgings in Half-Moon street, I asked my friend if he did not think it was about time for him to explain himself. His half-hint had suggested that he had some knowledge, or at least some suspicion, concerning the subject which was of so much interest to me.

When we were once in our sitting-room, with the nearly dead fire restored to a blaze by judicious nursing, and our pipes lighted, I took up the subject of the evening's entertainment, for the pur-

pose of drawing him out, if possible. But Lord Robert began to speak at once of Mortimer Mortimer. It appeared that he had heard of him for some time. In the higher circles, where Mortimer was occasionally seen, it was faintly surmised that he was some great social reformer, the chief of some strong association, or at least a daring investigator of problems of unusual interest to mankind.

"Where the idea came," said Lord Robert, "that he was at the head of some great organization, I do not know. I have heard it several times, though no one has professed to know anything positive. In Russia, several years ago, I joined a secret society. Its objects were, in the ordinary sense of the word, non-political. The chief aim of the society was to cultivate fraternal relations in the world; to eliminate, as far as possible, purely selfish interests from the relations of men—in other words, to teach and propagate the doctrine of Christ: to love one's neighbor as one loves himself. All that there was to religion that had any value, the society held, was to be found in that principle. I am still a member of that society and know its methods, which are most commendable.

"Soon after I joined I was called home by my father, and was given a civil appointment in India. I was, however, an active member of the organization long enough to learn its signs and its language. I knew, also, that the society that received me was only an elementary one, and that somewhere in the world there was a great central society, presided over by a master who wielded a vast power and whose great abilities were concentrated upon the work of raising the standard of human achievements. It is a poor commentary upon our civilization that, with all our wealth and intelligence, we have not been more successful in eliminating poverty, destitution, and their consequent suffering, from the world. It will not do to talk learnedly about the laws of nature, and the laws of supply and demand, in explanation of our defaults in this direction. If the well-to-do, the strong and the powerful were really banded together in a true fraternal bond, then, when a weak brother fell in the race of life, he would find some encouraging hand to help him, and we should not have the

continual retrograding tendency of the poorer sections of humanity.

"Have you ever studied the faces of the crowds that come out of the poor quarters in the great cities of the world? Have you not noticed the sullen savagery, the seeming brutishness of the greater number? It is in such quarters that the race becomes debased—through hideous surroundings, foul atmosphere, criminal contiguity, and poor nourishment—until we have crimes of the most terrifying nature, and criminals so hideous in character as to create a shudder at their mere sight. These criminals can be charged entirely to the selfishness of men. It is too long a story to go over now, the plan and aims of the society; but it is enough to summarize all by saying that it aimed to save the world to a newer and higher future by simply engaging the strong and healthy people in the world to unite in one association for the purpose of giving wise and judicious aid to the weak. One feature of its proposed work will give you a key to the practical nature of the reforms sought to be accomplished by it."

"What was that?"

"The society first pledged every member, upon his sacred word of honor, to undertake the responsibility of giving a good education and support to some one destitute child, until it could reach the age of self-sustaining. By this plan the society hoped in the end to do away with the necessity of charitable institutions for children, where they can have no personal

attention and where they graduate later with the pauper-taint upon them. The society offered to substitute personal attention and a sense of responsibility for the individual child. It was not proposed that any member should adopt any child, nor that he should be given any particular child to look after. Each member was to make his own selection. The personal attention and interest were sought to be attained and held during the period of the up-bringing.

"The giving of mere money, when it costs no self-denial, nor thought, was considered as nothing. Here members were not pledged beyond the care of one weak child. Each member solemnly covenanted to give to this particular child the best physical training, the most whole-

some nourishment and the education best suited to his needs, up to the time of his becoming of age, when he was affiliated as a member of the society itself. It was found that the cost of such education was trivial in comparison with the sums every day spent by well-to-do men upon mere ordinary pleasures, and that the money-tax involved was the least. It was hoped that, in time, the members would take pride in the selection and training of the waifs and strays of the world, as they do now in their training of horses and dogs.

"It was held, further," continued Lord Robert, "that when the well-to-do in the world were united together to carry out such a plan, crime and poverty would be driven from the face of the earth; for nearly all



Drawn by F. O. Small.

"STUDY ITS SHINING BEAUTIES!"

misery and suffering in the world come from an untrained, underfed, misused childhood. To reform adults was no part of the work of the elementary society. Neither was a member confined in his duty to the education of one child. If he could show that he could take care of more than one, without injury to those immediately dependent upon him, he had, of course, that privilege. The more successful a member was in this high work, the more rapid his advancement. The successful up-bringing of one child entitled the member to advancement to membership in one of the inner societies. I am still a member of the elementary society, and, from what I know of its work, I am convinced that Mortimer Mortimer belongs to the central organization, which is very limited in its membership and is made up only of men who have given up every other object in life, of a strictly selfish character, in order to have their whole time to work for the raising of the standard of human character and achievement."

"Why do you connect such a man and such an organization with the character of such a man as James Musgrove?"

"It's a mere surmise upon my part. The society I have mentioned is a very practical one. There is not a line concerning any formal religion in any of its writings. There is no impossible straining after an assumed standard of an impossible perfection. It is especially sought to interest those who have money and who have the command, therefore, of leisure. The experiment of this evening, suggested to me a possibility, although I would not venture to mention it outside of a confidential conversation with a trusted friend. Mind you, this is only a possibility. It may be that the central society is massing a great sum of money, to be employed as the basis of this movement, and your idea of a syndicate somehow fits into my mind. You note that all who step out are well-to-do; they are never accused of crime or ill-doing. They leave enough behind, so that no one suffers by their absence. They are nearly always men apparently absorbed in a mere selfish pursuit of gain. Now—"

"Well?"

"It may be that the central society from time to time marks a man of that

class, leads him to the fascinating border of some entrancing unknown, shields him when he steps out, then develops his second or third sub-consciousness, according to its nature, employs him, and thus gives the man that perfect contentment which is only found when engaged in work in accordance with one's better nature, while his money, or a portion of it, is used for the work of the society. Musgrove may have come in contact with some member of the society when he lived in Paris. The society has only lately begun its work in America, which is, you know, the land of material development and bad manners, and the land in which selfishness rules."

"Come, that is hard on my country."

"No. In what country were there, in the past, such great opportunities for the poor? You were free from the environments of Europe; but your history is like ours in the feudal days. It is one long story of seizure of wealth and property by the skillful and the bold, while your poor are now going to the wall with great rapidity. The slums of your great cities are even worse than the worst in Europe. Your material spirit, your greed for money, and your selfishness, show in everything—in the general indifference to art, in the general lack of manners, in the mad rush to see and be seen, and the subordination of your intellectual life to the most material one. You—"

"Oh, spare us! It is too late an hour to take up my country's defense. What you say, in one sense is literally true, so far as it relates to a portion; but you overlook all of the good which, I hope, is not in such a small minority as you would think. However, the fire is going out. Let us say good-night."

"Oh, by the way—I can't breakfast with you in the morning, as I have an early engagement; but I will meet you at the Carlton club for our dinner. Before you go to bed, take one suggestion."

"What is that?"

"Make the acquaintance of Mortimer Mortimer."

"Thank you. I will look him up to-morrow."

And what a morrow I had before me! No thought of it disturbed me as I calmly retired for the night.

[To be concluded in the March Number.]



Drawn by F. O. Small.

THE DISAPPEARANCE SYNDICATE.

BY T. C. CRAWFORD.

V.

THE next morning I found upon my mantel-piece a note from The Wasp editor, who had arrived in London and was at Brown's hotel. I had written for him a number of letters during the last six months descriptive of London and Continental social life. These had commanded enough attention to satisfy him, and convince him that I was not wholly a failure, and that the money invested in me was not a loss. I called at his hotel about noon, just after my light breakfast.

I found him the center of the confusion which was so delightful to him. The floor of his sitting-room was literally covered with newspapers, bills, telegrams, and the rubbish of a counting-house. Servants were continually coming and going in answer to his imperative orders.

He kept up an incessant demand for everything he could think of, while at the same time expressing continued dissatisfaction with everything done for him. Such a guest knows the true way to endear himself to a host, but the hour of retribution comes when the account is to be made up. But this modern editor never winced at any bill incurred in administering to the wants of his glorious self, and so he was tolerated in hotels where otherwise his uproar, and continual fault finding, might have ended in closing the doors against him.

I found him in a perfectly livid state of excitement. Without a word of greeting even, he cried out: "Have you seen the first edition of the Evening Standard?"

"No, I have not looked at a paper to-day."

"And here it is afternoon." My stand-



Drawn by
F. O. Small.

THE COUNCIL OF TEN. (See page 605.)

ing in his estimation went down many degrees. A man who could go by the mid-day breakfast hour without a look at those devices of the devil, the modern newspapers, was wholly outside of his range of comprehension. "Well, let me call your placid attention to a mysterious paragraph in the *Standard*." Here he caught up the newspaper, adjusted his eyeglasses, and read the following:

"Last evening the Duke of Wex visited the Victoria Gallery club with some friends. He left the club at half past one in the morning in his own carriage. His coachman, a man who has been in his service for twenty years, observed that his grace was strangely preoccupied as he came out of the club. He gave directions to drive home at once to the house occupied by him in Park Lane. Ten minutes after the carriage stopped in front of his house. The footman descended from the box to open the door and he found the carriage empty. As the carriage had been driven at a rapid pace from the club, the surprise of the servants who attended him was great. They drove back over the route to the club, but could not find him. The footman entered the club and made inquiries, but no information was elicited. Naturally, the disappearance of the duke under such circumstances of apparent mystery, has made a profound sensation. The police were asked today to assist in unravelling the mystery, as no trace or word has been heard of him during the night or up to a late hour this morning."

"Now," roared the editor, "you have a disappearance right under your nose. You must make a big story out of that to be cabled at once. Do you know the duke?"

"I have seen him. I know his son Lord Robert Melrose. He lives in the same lodging with me and shares my sitting-room. I saw the duke at the Victoria club last night. Lord Robert was up and out this morning before me. I shall not see him before dinner. I wonder if he knows of this news."

"Living with Lord Robert Melrose, the son of the Duke of Wex. Why didn't you mention it before?"

"Why should I?"

"But, it is most important."

The editor's manner changed towards

me at once. I was to write out a good story of the disappearance of the duke. Then I was at once to prepare an elaboration of the idea of the Disappearance syndicate. It was now time for publication. Had I learned anything new?

I told my questioner something about Lord Robert Melrose and the Russian society.

He roared with derision at the idea of a society being organized for mere purposes of doing good in the quietest way possible. That was grotesquely improbable. He had no doubt concerning the good faith of Lord Robert Melrose, but he had been taken in by the Central society. Those fellows were living high upon the plunder gathered in by them. He would expose them in the interest of reform and sensational journalism. "Run down this Mortimer Mortimer, and if he is connected with the disappearance of the many rich men through the world, we will make him disgorge the boodle."

I left after preparing a cable story in accordance with his instructions, and took the first cab that came along. I directed the driver to take me to the Carleton club, where I expected later to meet Lord Robert, and make some arrangement for finding Mortimer Mortimer. I remember distinctly the hour. I saw a large clock in the waiting-room of the hotel as I passed out. It was just four o'clock. The cabman who advanced from the head of the rank was a typical London cabby, red-faced, alert, tidy in dress, with a manner strangely blending impudence and respect. I told him where to go, gave him the shilling fare, and jumped into the cab. When I was about half way down to the club, which was not more than five minutes away, I suddenly felt an imperious desire to jump out of the cab. I obeyed it on the instant, and, however irrational was the act which I made in response to some sudden command, I should have obeyed it had it led to my death. I vaulted out lightly just before we had reached Piccadilly. The short side street we were in was comparatively deserted. No one was near me when I jumped out, and I observed that the cabman was looking straight ahead of him as if buried in thought.

I turned in an opposite direction from the cab, and soon was around the cor-

ner. Here I took another cab, paid the fare, and in a moment was in another side street. Here I again jumped out. I changed cabs three times without being observed, and without any particular thought in my mind but that I was engaged in an ordinary occupation, although in reality no one seeking to elude detection could have employed more successful means to evade pursuit.

Following my last directions, the third cab brought me within a few squares of Park Lane. As I jumped out, unobserved, as before, I found myself alone in Hargrave street, down which I walked quickly, until I had nearly reached the lane, where a small door in a garden wall which surrounded a great mansion silently opened, and I plunged through it as if I were expected, traversed a carefully laid out garden, and entered the house. It was apparently deserted. I walked through one vast hallway after another, mounting wide and dimly lighted stairways, until I came to the top of

the house. Here I kept on, up a circular stairway, which went up to a lofty dome, where I entered a circular room, at least twenty feet in diameter, which was aglow with a soft, clear light, producing a wonderfully soothing effect upon the eyes. I had noticed but little about the house as I entered, beyond the general fact that its dimensions and furnishing were palatial in character.

The room which I now entered contained no windows. It was ventilated from the top. The interior of the dome was pale blue, with a magnificent fresco, representing the angel Gabriel, summoning the earth to judgment. The walls were in panels of white and gold. Around the line of the circles of the room were broad divans, covered with soft white furs and numerous white silken pillows. The floor was in white marble, with small squares of blue, set at the corners of the larger squares. Suspended from the dome, by a silver-covered cord, was a globe the size of an ordinary globe of the schools.

Only this one was clear, translucent, shining, identical in character with the ball shown by Mortimer Mortimer, the night before, at the Victoria Gallery club. Underneath the ball was a dark table, inlaid in some fantastic oriental design. Upon the table was a large sheet of white paper, fixed in the center. Near the table was a strong arm-chair, with the head of an angel of light carved upon the top. The figure was looking aloft, holding in a gracefully posed hand a star.

The room had an atmosphere distinct to itself. It fairly radiated rest, peace and harmony. I had not been in the room for more than a second when I became fairly intoxicated with its charm. What was it that made my heart pulsate with such rapture, my every breath an aspiration of delight? I did not stop then to analyze the charm. It is best to grasp unquestioningly perfect happiness when it comes, and so I quietly walked, still like one in a trance, to the side of the circular divan, where I sunk down in an attitude of luxurious repose, and gazed dreamily at the central globe, which glowed and paled with mysterious fires as incessant in their continued movement as the waves of mid-ocean.



Drawn by F. O. Small.

A NOTE FROM THE WASP EDITOR.

"Where was I? Why had I come there? What mysterious power had brought me there?" were questions I did not ask for a long time. I was only too content to have stepped out from the grim realities of modern life into this enchanted atmosphere. As I lay upon the silken couch and studied the wave-lines of light in the ball, I gradually came back to myself. My usual powers of observation were restored to me. I saw, at this moment, some dark characters forming upon one of the sheets of the paper lying upon the table. I arose from the couch, glanced at the sheet of paper, and found written thereon, in a clear, scholarly hand, the following note:

"I learned today that you were desirous of meeting me, and that you had received instructions to write what is called, in the latest jargon of American journalism, 'an exposure of my career.' You wish to know also about a disappearance syndicate, the Central Society, and many things which interest and puzzle you and which you think I may be able to explain. On account of the friendship of Lord Robert Melrose for you, I am disposed to see you and to talk with you. You are at present in my house, upon my invitation. I will have the pleasure of dining with you at half past seven this evening.

"MORTIMER MORTIMER."

Scarcely had I read the note, when the letters faded and the paper was left as blank as before. I may add here that the paper had remained attached to the table, directly under the ball, during my reading. Any sensation of surprise seemed impossible in this enchanted chamber. I fairly bathed in the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. Thoughts of a material character drifted away from me. What was it to me whether there was a disappearance syndicate or not? What was there more vulgar than curiosity for mere curiosity's sake? I had now even lost my desire to meet Mortimer Mortimer. I cannot describe my pleasure by using any ordinary words of comparison. The pleasure was wholly spiritual and intellectual. The body and its wants were forgotten.

Such a sense of perfect peace and contentment I had never known before. It was so novel, that my mind was completely lost in a flood of rapturous contemplation. I sank back upon the circular di-

van and coiled myself into a knot of luxurious ease. My eyes now came back to the ball, and I soon saw that its mysterious flashings had a meaning. I was familiar with the Morse code, and as soon as I had concentrated my attention upon the globe after making this discovery, I saw that the news of the world was being flashed upon it by this telegraphic code. It was a curious use of electricity, and one wholly unknown to me. There now came a message personal to me:

"Will you kindly indicate what you would like for your dinner?"

This prosaic message, coming to me in my anything but prosaic surroundings, made me smile. I left the cloud-land where my dreamings had carried me, and became aware that I was intensely hungry. I involuntarily thought of what I would like, even to the wines that best pleased me; but before I could think of any way of communicating my answer, there came flashing upon the globe:

"All right! I understand you. Dinner will be served at sharp half past seven. No dress."

I was now like the child in the Christmas pantomime. I was ready to accept everything as it came, and wanted no explanations. I looked at my watch and saw that it was six o'clock. I had been in the circular globe-room of light for nearly two hours, and it did not seem longer than so many moments.

At a quarter after seven, a tiny metallic sound came from the globe, and I heard the clear music of an orchestra of many pieces. Then I must have lost consciousness for a few moments, for, when I next opened my eyes, I saw that the table under the globe was covered with fine linen and set out with the white china and the glittering silver of a dinner service. In the center of the table was a tall epergne filled with roses. The table was set for two.

By the side of the table stood my host, Mortimer Mortimer. He looked exactly as he did when he appeared upon the platform of the Victoria Gallery club. Only, now, instead of being in evening dress, he wore a dark morning costume. He bowed gravely to me as I arose, and indicated the nearest seat as mine. As I took the seat, a Japanese servant entered the room and began to serve the soup.

*Drawn by F. O. Small.*

"I FELT AN IMPERIOUS DESIRE TO JUMP OUT OF THE CAB."

Everything during the dinner was matter-of-fact and in accordance with the regular course of things. My host said, as dinner began :

"There is no enchantment in this house, save that of modern science. I say now, as I said at the Gallery club, that I do not deal with the supernatural. I have no desire to mystify or to surprise anyone. Where I make an experiment or an explanation, it is with a definite object. If you will wait until the dinner is passed, I will answer any questions you may wish to ask.

"How did you know of me, and that I wanted to see you?"

"Lord Robert Melrose told me. He met me in Hyde Park this afternoon and said you were anxious to see me."

"When did he tell you?"

"At half past three."

"And at four I was upon my way here and yet you profess to be no master of magical arts."

"All that is susceptible of explanation. Wait until the dinner is passed."

The dinner was one that was worthy of the host. Everything was simple but exquisitely good. The soup was like a fine wine. Each course was dainty, at once a whip to the palate and satisfying. The dishes I had indicated were cooked as I never had tasted them before. At the desert, fruits were served in the greatest profusion. The delicacy of the wines, the elegance of the service, the excellence of the food, left behind a sense of well-being, the reverse of the heavy sensation that follows the eating of the usual dinner. Our conversation during dinner related to the ordinary topics of the day.

At its conclusion the service was cleared away in a moment, and then Mortimer Mortimer, still sitting opposite to me, pointed to a bundle of Egyptian cigarettes upon a silver plate between us. When I had lighted one, he excusing himself from smoking, began the conversation by saying :

"Will you excuse me if I ask a few questions before answering those I know you are anxious to make. What has been your motive in seeking to probe the so-called mystery of Mortimer Mortimer?"

"I fear not a very exalted one. I love puzzles, but my motive in your case goes back to my first studies concerning the various disappearances of men through the world. In my study of this general subject, I was led to you as possibly one who could give me light and help."

"But underneath all that?"

"Well, I am now looking into the subject for *The Wasp*, an American newspaper."

Mortimer frowned, as he asked, "Are you a regular member of the staff of that paper?"

To this I replied "no," and then explained how I had been led to accept the special employment that had brought me to London to investigate the possibility of a disappearance syndicate.

"How did you come to assume that I could throw any light upon the matter?"

"It was Lord Robert Melrose who suggested it."

During this time Mortimer Mortimer was studying me intently. Finally, he said: "If I did not believe you were better than you profess, I should be very reluctant to talk to you at all. Suppose for a moment, I could give you some information concerning the subject of your inquiry. Will you kindly tell me why I should? Can you, as an honest man, say that the information will be used in such a way as to do anyone any good?"

"It will be used as a basis for an article."

"For publication in a sensational newspaper?"

"Yes."

"Has this newspaper ever really served the public?"

"It prates of nothing else but of its duty to the public!"

"But in reality."

"Honestly, I cannot say that it ever has. It is published first and last to make money for its owner."

"So you ask me, a perfect stranger, to expose to your gaze my privacy and my innermost life for the sake of making copy to satisfy mere vulgar curiosity. No, a thousand times no. I will never consent to do that. If I did not know that you were capable of better things, I should not talk to you at all. I do know about the things you have so carelessly stumbled upon. There is something in this subject wholly beyond what you have imagined. But it is not what you have supposed. You have a thread of fact that could be used very cunningly to make a sensational story. It could not do harm to the cause I represent, but it would do harm to you. So before I go farther into this subject, I will call your attention to a few possibilities of modern science. First, this ball which hangs suspended here should interest you. It is one of the latest achievements of science. It is the product of the united

work of some of the best minds of this world. A knowledge of it is not given to the public, and it may be generations before it will be. But I will show you some of its workings and its powers before proceeding to its explanation. You have here a central receiver of sound and of light. The person who understands its working, can with its aid see and hear what is taking place at a distance. It is also a medium of thought transference, and a constant radiator of electrical force. I wrote you the note in my library below, and it was flashed to the surface of the sensitized paper in the center of the table in my actual handwriting, which faded soon after the impression was passed. I sustained the impression until I learned by the reflex action in my library that you had read it. The atmosphere in this room is regulated by the globe. Through it your system was at once keyed up to its perfect electrical tone, which is the only perfect state of existence. When you have the proper electrical conditions in your body you are at the maximum of your powers, and disease or fatigue are impossible. Electricity is the life that animates everything. Electricity, as you know, can be transmitted without wires upon the air currents. Even electric lights have been produced without the actual contact of wires. How far this science has progressed under the direction of the Central society," here Mortimer Mortimer's eyes flashed, "I will, perhaps, indicate later."

"Now," he continued, "will you kindly give your attention to the ball. Fix your mind upon some one you want to see. Concentrate your mind upon the ball and look into its innermost depths."

Mechanically, I obeyed. Upon the instant the vista of the globe enlarged and I gazed as through a clear magnifying glass directly into my sitting-room in Half-Moon street. I saw Lord Robert in the room. He was looking on the mantel for some note. Then he turned and rang the bell sharply. I saw the servant enter and then I heard the following conversation as distinctly as if I had been in the room:

"What time did Mr. Livingstone leave the house?"

"Just after his breakfast."

"Did he leave any word for me?"

"Yes, he said to tell you when you returned that he would meet you at the Carleton club at seven o'clock for dinner."

"Mr. Livingstone has not been back since?"

"No, sir."

"Very good. That will do."

The servant retired. Lord Robert now said to himself: "I should think Livingstone would have returned before this. I wonder if he found Mortimer Mortimer and was detained. I did not find him at the club at seven, and he has sent me no word. Well, I must go and dine, as it is late enough, heaven knows." With this he left the room.

"Do you wish to follow him?" said Mortimer.

"No, not at present."

I turned to Mortimer Mortimer as I said: "How am I to know that this is not a repetition of the experiment made by you at the Victoria gallery? How can I know that you are not making me see and hear what you wish me to hear, and that you are making me respond to your will as you did this afternoon, when you arrested me in a cab and summoned me here?"

"Your question is pertinent, but future tests will show you that this surmise is not correct. The element of animal magnetism, as it is known to you, need not now be considered, as it is a subordinate branch of the general subject of electricity. It belongs to the department of personal electricity. This globe represents the highest achievement of mechanical electricity. It makes simple and certain what was formerly the occasional and uncertain gift of a few individuals. All of our sensations are recorded in the brain by electric waves along the lines of the nerves, which end in producing an impression upon the brain. Thought is the brain in action. The brain is the battery, and the thought is electricity generated. This brought in contact with this high instrument of electrical skill, and you have the means of seeing and hearing what is going on at a distance, by projecting the thought-wave upon this globe. Between two people who understand the use of the instrument a conversation can be maintained at any distance."

"You mean between any points on this globe?"

"Let it stand there, as I do not want to go too far in this preliminary conversation."

At this, something within me moved through my body like a warm wave. A tide of emotion swept over my mind. All the littleness of my past came to me, in clear, sharp lines. Suddenly, I said:

"Mortimer Mortimer, I wish that you thought me worthy of becoming your associate, no matter how humble might be my place."

"The wish shows you to be worthy. I knew that, when you were waked up, you would become conscious that life, as it is now lived by the average mortal, is wholly unworthy and devoid of a proper object. With the most fortunate, it is but a brief struggle of selfishness, for successes achieved at the expense of others. Perhaps you understand even now why this great and simple invention of the electrical globe could not be given to the world."

"Surely. It would only be used by the strong for the more successful preying upon the weak. Such inventions would naturally come first into the hands of the rich and the powerful, and its superior knowledge would be used in the further selfish aggregation of power."

"More than that," said Mortimer Mortimer, "it would become, in the present diseased condition of society, a weapon in the hands of the criminal. In time, I hope that it may become the means of regenerating the world and of giving to it its proper place in the universe. It is, after all, only a union of the principle of the phonograph, the telephone and the kineograph of Edison; so one instrument serves for all. It is no more wonderful, as it now stands, than would have been either the telephone or the phonograph, twenty-five years ago. But, come, I have confidence in you. You may ask me what question you will, and I will answer. Leave the general subject to the last."

"First, how did you summon me here?"

"That was by an exercise simply of my will."

"How did you know where I was?"

"I returned directly to the house after seeing Lord Robert Melrose in the park

near here, and looked for you in the globe."

"Did you direct my movements here?"

"Yes."

"Then, to all practical purposes, I am the hero of another case of mysterious disappearance?"

"You are. But you can return to your former life, if you wish, by simply giving me your word to be silent concerning what you have learned, or may learn, in this house. We hold no one against his will."

"We? Then there is a Central society, as you said?"

"Yes."

"Are you its head?"

"No."

"Do you belong to the Inner section?"

"Yes."

"Do you know James Musgrove?"

"I do."

"Where is he now?"

"He is at present in one of the monasteries in the Himalayas."

"Did he go there of his own free will?"

"Most assuredly. Do you suppose, for a moment, that we seek to have with us anyone who is not willing to coöperate with us? I dare say, sometime in the future you will be able to see and talk with Musgrove. But now you can have but a passing glimpse of him, and I shall especially request you not to disturb him with any questions."

With this remark, Mortimer turned to the globe, and within a second I saw before me a white-washed cell in the distant monastery. In this cell sat James Musgrove, ex-money-hunter, attired in the white robe of an Eastern monk. He was looking steadfastly at the pictures which were being flashed before his eyes in a globe which hung from the center of his cell. He was studying, with earnest care, the various pictures of his speculative life. He was made to see the unhappiness and the wrongs following the speculations which had been encouraged by him and his class. Tears were actually chasing down the cynical face of this broad-faced man, who, in the past, had seen regiments of men ruined without even drawing a long breath of regret.

"Musgrove, at heart, is a good fel-

low," said Mortimer. "We are developing now his better consciousness. He has been tired a long time of what he is doing. We are training him now to see things as they actually are, and very soon we will have him at work as a member of one of the Inner societies, although it will be a long time before he can come to the Central station. You may rest assured of one thing, however, and that is, that he is contented and that no earthly inducement would ever tempt him to go back to the life he formerly lived."

My questions now ceased. My mind was in a tumult. I tried to grasp the situation clearly. I was face to face with one of the best preserved secrets in the world, and the door to its innermost mystery stood wide open.

Finally, Mortimer said to me: "You have experienced a desire to join us. Before doing so you should know generally what we are doing and what we hope to accomplish. This room is one of the places where candidates come. Those who stand the tests and are accepted, are given



"I ENTERED THE HOUSE."

Drawn by
F. O. Small.

their work. We have been so careful in summoning candidates by a study of their surroundings, that thus far we have had to reject only one. That one was the Washington official noted by you in your talk with your friend, the professor. At the last moment the politician became too strong for his better nature. A wave of forgetfulness was passed over his brain and he was sent away. He came to his former consciousness in Sydney, Australia. From this place he made his way home to Washington, after an absence of over a year. He could give no acceptable explanation of his absence. He is now back at his profession of law, and while he is conscious sometimes of having missed a great opportunity, this year of absence is a blank in his mind. But you have had enough for one day. You can remain here, and if you want anything, may address yourself to the globe."



Drawn by F. O. Small.

"I AROSE FROM THE COUCH AND GLANCED AT THE SHEET OF PAPER."

Here my host turned to one of the panels, and pushing it open showed a passageway to a small adjacent room. "In this room," said he, "you will find linens, toilet articles, changes of apparel, anything you may need for your short stay; and now, good-night." With this my host departed down the circular stairway, dropping a silken hanging over the passageway, leaving me to the exquisite luxury of being alone with my thoughts in the life-giving atmosphere of this beautiful chamber.

VI.

If I had been merely occupied with amusing myself without other thought, I might well have been contented to have remained in this room for the rest of my days. The whole world was at my command. Its news was constantly flashing before my eyes. Its secrets were to be had for the asking. The motives of men, the thousand and one puzzles of every day life, made an entrancing study. I remained alone in this room for a week, seeing only the Japanese servant, before I thought of summoning Mortimer Mortimer. During this time, owing to the peculiar electric atmosphere in the room, my nature appeared to have changed. I seemed to realize more and more clearly the perfect hopelessness of life as it was lived. The indifference and cruelty of it all were relieved by so little of the leaven of unselfishness that when once my curiosity was satisfied, there succeeded a feeling of impatience that it should be so. This was followed by a firm resolution upon my part that I would devote my life and thought to something better than self. This determination was no sooner made than the globe gave forth a metallic note, and a moment later Mortimer Mortimer was with me.

"Your resolution is a wise one. You will now best serve your true interests by apparently forgetting them. Are you prepared to renounce all personal ambition, to give up all hope of riches?"

"Yes."

"Are you willing to be obscure, unknown and poor?"

"Yes."

"There are no great formalities of membership. There is but little to learn

that can be taught you by word of mouth. Neither will I now demand a pledge of secrecy from you. Perhaps, in time, it would be well to make the story of your coming here known. Now I will give you a brief account of the work we are doing, and that which we propose to do in the future, and how I became attached to it. Twenty years ago I was in Paris with a large sum of money at my command. I was then the heir to a large fortune. I am a Russian born, although I defy anyone who does not know to name my nationality. My father was English, but my mother was Russian. I lived the life of pleasure that is so alluring when one is young. I exhausted everything in the way of sensual pleasure, my fortune drifting through my hands until at the last I was left penniless. Then I was tempted to commit a crime. Years of debilitating pleasure and loose companionship had eaten almost the last shred of my moral nature, but there was one fiber that resisted at the thought of crime. I fell ill through distress and suffering, in fact, became hysterical through the disease of my overwrought nerves. I was taken to one of the public hospitals, and there I came under the care of Dr. Charcot. In my shattered condition I was easily made one of his subjects, and in the magnetic sleep a subconsciousness was developed in me that was so strong that it took complete possession of me, and after six months of patient care, my selfish character was sunken, I now know, forever.

"When I left the hospital Dr. Charcot was good enough to secure for me the position of secretary to a distinguished Orientalist, a learned man, who had spent a long life studying the characteristics of the various religions of the world in the periods of their early development. I was with him several years and became, in the peaceful and serene atmosphere of the old man's library, imbued with an almost savage desire to redeem the years of my life that I had apparently wasted. One night I received a summons such as you received when you came here. I left my master and walked forth in the night, following the movement of another's will, until I found myself in a great hotel, surrounded by a park, in the outskirts of Paris.

"It was here my new life began. I shall not now go into details. The influence of Charcot, acquired in the hospital, was exerted magnetically, and I was brought, through it, to the château where lived the president of the Russian society, described to you by Lord Melrose. I became a member, and continued my work with my master, the Orientalist, until about five years ago. It was during my work in Paris that I became acquainted with James Musgrove. I became deeply impressed, after a time, with the struggle continually going on between two very vigorous and very diverse elements in his nature. The one that was uppermost was coarse, selfish and devoted to material pursuits. The other was poetical, with aspirations as lofty and great as ever visited the brain of Shakespeare."

He paused at my look of surprise, and then added:

"In time, I was fortunate enough to become advanced to membership in the Central society, and now I am one of the Inner Council of Ten that governs the world."

"Governs the world?"

"Yes. Not as might ordinarily be understood. But it is a government that grows day by day and will in the end be the one government for the entire world, doing away with all others. You need not look surprised. It is simple enough. The elementary societies throughout the world are strong. Through them we have invited to our Inner societies, during the last few years, hundreds of very rich men. Their disappearance from the active circles of the world has not attracted any particular attention beyond the local ripple following their departure. We have selected only those who could be spared, who were doing no good to themselves, and whose departure will not impose suffering upon anyone. When they are once with us, they would prefer death to going back to their old life. They willingly give their money to us. We have a reserve fund now of over one billion of dollars. We use this money to control great institutions throughout the world. The monasteries of Thibet are with us. In the Himalayas we have built numerous monasteries of our own. We own great houses in the various capitals of the world. The Council of Ten lives for a



Drawn by F. O. Small.

"EVERYTHING DURING THE DINNER WAS MATTER-OF-FACT."

portion of its time in the world, and, as presiding officers of trust companies, manage, without attracting notice, the vast treasury of the Central society."

"But how can you own such vast possessions as hotels, monasteries, and the like, throughout the world, without becoming subjects for curious gossip?"

"Because we move only as individuals. The whole world is bare to the gaze of inspectors, who sit in every house, watching the globes, who occupy the place of central telegraph stations. Here the members are watched, and warned constantly of every possible antagonistic influence. We have cultivated the wills of the Council of Ten until, united, they can, through the influence of a large central globe, highly charged, send out thought-waves sufficiently powerful to affect a nation. This work is now going on at the central station of London. It is owing to the influence of this station that war has been so long held back in Europe. We do not say that there will never be a war again; that will depend only upon a power higher than our own. But peace is now in the air, and arbitra-

tion is taking the place of war, as a means of settling disputes."

"What is the primary basis of this new social order?"

"Simply to carry out Christ's new commandment, 'that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' There are no other laws governing it. There is no other creed contained therein."

"But how can you guard against the invasion of ambition and a perversion of the lofty aims of the society by the necessarily imperfect men who compose its directors?"

"In the atmosphere of the electric globes, man's nature is placed in accord with the laws of the universe, which are governed by justice and love. When the Council meets, an improper thought would break the harmony and strike a discordant note upon the central globe, like a clap of thunder. Every member knows that his every act and thought is laid bare and recorded at every central station. Even if this were not a protection, I should defy anyone to have his eyes really opened to the meanness of the

motives of ordinary life and ambition, and ever consent to leave this life of serenity and of high purpose, (with the mirror of the real world constantly before his eyes), for the dull incidents of the life of an ordinary ambition."

"But can everyone be brought in accord with the laws of electrical harmony?"

"Not always. There is no one who has not an inner nature better than its exterior; but, with some, this is so deeply hidden as to make necessary several generations of development. We take the most favorable natures first and impress them. You have observed that great popular movements come often without much preliminary agitation. The electrical current that runs through an excited crowd moving as a mob will often produce deeds of cruelty the individual would contemplate only with horror. It is important to control and direct the thought-waves for the good; that is one of the subjects sought to be accomplished by the director at the central stations. You have, doubtless, observed the recent interest in spiritual things, now so prevalent in Europe. Works upon theosophy, occultism, spiritualism, and ghost stories, are sold by the thousands. This is owing to a spiritual, anti-material wave now constantly being sent out from the central station in this house."

"Do you encourage spiritualism?"

"As it is generally understood, no. But even that, with its wildest absurdities, is better than gross materialism. But spiritualism, as construed by mediums in the form of table-tipping, the summoning of spirits from the vasty deep to tell Susan whether James is in love with her, or the stock-broker how stocks will move, is even now out of date. If there is nothing better in the next world than a return to this to act as the messenger of a medium, working for money to serve the vulgar or selfish curiosity of credulous visitors, then the next world is vastly inferior to this. But spiritualism in the highest sense, the reaching up to a higher power for support, the belief in inspiration for those who are worthy to receive it, we fully believe, for we know some of the finest modern compositions are mere copies of tones flashed to our central station in the Himalayas from higher and more distant

spheres. It is at this station that we are studying the questions of the highest interest. It is there that we have established connection with the other worlds, through the power to transfer thought upon the great electric wave-conductors of the universe. Full histories of these worlds will be published in an age when the public will be educated sufficiently to comprehend. Now the ordinary scientists of the earth would regard such publications as emanations from a mad-house."

"Have you sought to absolutely prove that there is another world for us after this?"

"No. That is no more necessary for one who has studied the law of the electric forces of the universe through our globes, than it would be to prove the sun shines. We are constantly working, when in full electric harmony, in the flood of the light of love of the central universe, and we see and have every moment the evidences of another life as convincing as the light that shines, indicates the sun as its dispensing power. We seek to avoid the so-called supernatural and keep to the development in the highest degree of the possibilities of the life on this earth. It is here that we are to be made worthy of a higher life. Our inner society now holds within its hands the seeds of the millennium."

"Have you the power to reach the perfect existence here?"

"For the few only. We have abolished from among us disease or pain. Electricity as the remedial agent has done this. We cannot perform the miracle of restoring the actual loss of physical organs, nor can we more than postpone the day of death, but we prevent the inroads of disease by electric guards. As our system is at present organized, we select as members of our society only those possessing good physical organizations. With the perfection of existence will come the perfection of government. When once Christ's commandment of love is fully lived up to, the necessity for all governments, such as those now organized, will no longer exist. No one will seek to injure or wrong his neighbor, and as government is organized for the protection of the individual, when he no longer needs protection the usefulness of government is at an end. Our work is now

to prepare the public—to impress it in new directions.”

“Have you no fear of being disturbed in your work by political organizations jealous of the power of the Central Council?”

“No. Our control of affairs is by indirection and by the impression of thought transference. We break no laws. We seek no fruits of power. An electric current surrounds each one of our stations through which no one not invited by us or affiliated with us, can pass. Our interference is only for the purpose of doing good. Our progress is slow, as the world is crusted throughout every social channel with stupid gross materialism and a selfishness perfectly inhuman. Murders the most atrocious, crimes the most terrible, and suffering the most piteous in character, make no impression upon the hardened sympathies of modern civilization, while the mere suggestion of religious thought is coupled by the world with weak mentality.

“In no place do we find so much need of reform as in the churches themselves, and in no place do we meet with such resistance to the waves of love constantly sent towards them from our central stations. What member of any church follows today strictly in the path of his Master? Who of them would dare to follow His poverty, His obscurity, and His suffering? There we have found so much resistance from those intrenched in authority, backed by the accumulations of wealth, that we have turned our batteries upon the people themselves. The organization of the Salvation army is the direct result of the central London station. Its rapid growth is owing to the stimulus of our stations throughout the world.”

“But the Salvation army is ridiculed even by the churches, and every one feels qualified to look upon its members with pitying contempt.”

“Yes, but it is almost the only religious organization in the world today whose members are honestly seeking to follow in the footsteps of Christ. They are poor. Their lives are consecrated to poverty, to the renunciation of self, while they do not shut themselves up in dreary prisons, seeking the purity of asceticism, but walk into the thickest rush of life to

carry the light of love and truth to the poorest, the lowest, and the debased.”

“But—”

“Stop, before another word. Come with me to the globe and let us look for a moment upon the hourly work of one of the members of this band.” I turned to the globe and I saw instantly a dark, noisome alley in the east end of London. A young girl, with a white resolute face, dressed in a robe of dark-blue, wearing the bonnet of the army, now appeared alone. She walked through the alley and ascended the stairway of a tenement crowded in all its quarters with the homes of the poor. Upon one floor I saw three families, crowded like animals, fifteen in all, in one room. Oaths, imprecations and quarrelling were heard on all sides. Here dwelt the criminal and the outcast. Stalwart drunkards, dissolute women, sleeping in a dull, sodden stupor, little children poisoned in the foul atmosphere, desolate mothers, and discouraged workmen, made up a population of misery that can be found everywhere, every day in the year, in any of the slums of the great cities. I shuddered at the thought of this young girl coming in contact with this vile throng. But her uniform made her sacred. I saw even the vilest of criminals give way before her with respect. I did not hear her say one word about religion. She came to help, and in any way she could, the poor and suffering. She shamed the most dissolute by asking permission to help clean up their dreary rooms. Soon she was joined by a companion, and for nearly an hour I watched these brave girls carrying water into rooms that never had been cleaned, dressing the children of drunken parents, steadfastly working in the grim and noisome atmosphere, with the patience and loving energy of so many angels of light.

“Now,” said Mortimer Mortimer, “study well the work of these women.”

“Do they do this every day?”

“Every day of their lives.”

“But surely they do not spend all of their lives here.”

“That is what they do. They would have no influence if they did not come and live among these people. In the darkest quarters these missionaries take rooms, clean one spot in this foul quarter,

and then work as no domestic servant ever has worked, to fight the devil of dirt with soap and pure water. You cannot touch these people until they are made clean and fed. Every day some devoted heroine in this army loses her life from disease or exposure. They nurse the newly born, train the growing and close the eyes of the dying. They accept poverty as their share. They know that they must be obscure and that they may fall in the first period of their engagement, but their courage never hesitates. Yet the poets who celebrate the deeds of the hero who, crazed by excitement, charges into the jaws of death upon a mission of murder would never dream of

Mortimer Mortimer said, "It is a signal for a meeting of the Council of the Ten. Wait, I want to ask a question."

He now turned towards the globe and in a moment there came back the answer, "yes," in the Morse characters.

I have asked permission to connect you with the council-chamber, that you may both see and hear the proceedings of that body. You have been examined and accepted as a member on probation of one of the inner societies, and we shall rely upon your pen as your contribution towards the work. You shall be a thought-wave in action impelled by the power that is above us. But you are to be taught many things before you return to the world again."

"But when was I accepted as a member."

"Yesterday."

"But how?"

"The electrical register in the Council reported yesterday about noon that your system indicated one hundred in the scale of harmony. That entitled you to be recorded as an acceptable candidate."

"But I made no pledges. I have taken no oaths."

"None are necessary. With our system personal examination might in the end lead to deception. The electrical register of a man's inner character never lies."

"How long am I to remain?"

"Until you yourself wish to go so as to be at work. It will not be long. Remember too, that when you are gone from this sta-

tion and appear in the world you will still be in constant touch with us. All of our central stations will be open to you. Before you go you will be given an electrical ball similar to the one you saw with me in the Victoria gallery. By its aid you can communicate always with the central stations for advice or information. Be careful not to lose it, though in strange hands it would have no more use than an ordinary telegraph instrument in the hands of a savage. Besides this your will is to be strengthened to the grade of one thousand. Each member of the Council of Ten has a will worked up by electrical processes so that by union with the



Drawn by F. O. Small.

"WHAT TIME DID MR. LIVINGSTONE LEAVE THE HOUSE?"

looking into the life of a brave Salvation army lass for a subject for his cantos. This movement is growing and we intend that it shall in the end revolutionize the churches until they wake to their duty and go forth to try to equal, if possible, the good now being accomplished by the only religious organization on the face of the globe that has a place or a thought for the outcast and the criminal poor."

I do not know how much longer this conversation might have continued nor how many more scenes might have been shown me had there not suddenly appeared upon the globe a signal which I did not comprehend.

globe it represents a degree of one hundred thousand. That is, the will of one such member is equal to the united wills of that number of people. For the purpose of thought transference solely to distant spheres, this strength of will can by union with other mechanical devices be worked up to a billion. But you will find out all about these things soon so that they will not excite your surprise. They would have all been known to mankind long ago, if the minds of men were not so clouded by materialism and disbelief in everything not represented by money or some equivalent."

With this Mortimer withdrew, saying that the Council was about to meet, and while he could take part in its proceedings by remaining with me, there were advantages secured by coming in actual personal contact with his associates, and so he left me awake with curiosity concerning the proceedings of the Council that secretly ruled the world.

I had been for years in attendance upon Congress in my own country, had studied the Houses of Parliament in London, the proceedings of the Corps Legislatif in France, the Cortes in Madrid, the Reichstag in Berlin, in fact had been a witness of the methods of legislative proceedings in the various leading countries of the world, where selfish interests entirely predominated. At last I was to be a witness of the proceedings of a supreme Council whose single rule of procedure was unselfishness, and whose code was a pure love for mankind.

Need I say that I rubbed my eyes wide open and was all attention when the globe sounded and I read the message, "The Council is about to meet."

VII.

Hardly had my friend, Mortimer Mortimer, left the room, when I addressed my most earnest attention to the globe. I had previously found that concentration of attention upon the subject under consideration was of vital importance, for the scenes shifted with the current of the thought, and, unless the thought was clear, the scenes in the globe were dim. A dull person, with but little imagination or interest in things, would not see much

in the globe, beyond a succession of blurred, disconnected visions.

I was much excited at the thought of having an opportunity to look behind the scenes and watch the powers which govern the world at work. At first, I could not see clearly; but this dimness of vision continued only for a moment. Then I saw a large, wide room, with lofty ceilings. It was a council chamber, worthy of the powerful body to be assembled there. It was somber-hued in its furnishings. The ceiling was light, but divided off into heavily framed circles. The light surface of each was covered by a map of some one of the various countries of the world. The center circle was larger than any of the others and upon it was outlined the plane of the world.

This shifted, in alternating flashes of light, showing first the old world and then the new. The brilliant colors of the coats-of-arms of the various countries showed in brilliant relief in the center of the other circles. The wood-work of the



*Drawn by
F. O. Small.*

"TEARS WERE ACTUALLY CHASING DOWN
THE CYNICAL FACE."

room, which included the polished floor, the high and polished wainscot and the broad, heavily carved frieze, had the rich warmth of color of old Spanish mahogany.

Large, high-backed chairs with arms, broad and strong enough for giants, were placed about a heavy round table which stood in the center of the room. Places were arranged for ten. In front of each seat was a sensitized paper similar to the one under the globe in the room where I was. Suspended above the table was also a globe, about three feet in diameter. It looked very large in comparison with the globe in my room. When I first began to see this room distinctly, it was unoccupied. I should add here that this room apparently had no windows. The central globe furnished a clear light, so well diffused that there was not a dark spot or corner in the room, while under the table the shadow was a faint gray.

Soon I heard a low sound of music, and the portières at the right parted and the Council of Ten entered and quickly took their places around the table. I was astonished to find that this Council of Ten was divided equally in its membership between the two sexes. All wore evening dress. The men were of varying types. The eldest was a venerable sage, while the youngest was not older than Lord Robert Melrose. The ladies of this august circle were of the highest types. Their faces were beautiful and intelligent. All were richly dressed and had an air of great ease and refinement.

There was no chief in this council, to sit in any post of honor. There was no order of precedence. No one had a special seat, and no rule seemed to prevail for the seating of the Council, beyond the one of alternating the sexes. Naturally, my attention was arrested by the novel sight of women seated as peers of men in this high board of administration. The eldest of the five ladies was at the right of the picture as it appeared in the globe before me. She was at least sixty years of age. Her hair was snowy white and combed in a thick, high, rolling mass from a broad forehead. Her eyes were dark. Her complexion was of a childlike fairness, and her regular features were overshadowed by a look of gentleness that would have subdued a savage. She wore a black lace-dress that set off the

lines of her robust womanly figure. Diamonds flashed in her hair and at her throat. Her arms and hands would have done credit to a young woman.

Three of the other ladies were of ripe years also, with forceful faces and calm manners. They secured, however, but casual notice from me. I passed them rapidly in review, and then, not pausing to examine the faces of the grave and serious men, who sat with their earnest gaze fixed upon the globe, my eyes swiftly turned to the one who was, for the moment, the overshadowing figure of the circle to me.

The fifth lady was the personification of all the beauty that is to be found in youth, encased in a body abounding in health of absolute perfection. What words can give one an idea of such youth, in such perfection? Her form showed the noble lines of a goddess, while her face was radiant with life, purity and high purpose. It needs the actual sight to obtain any impression of her charms. I knew but few of the great ladies of the world of London, and so I could not, for the moment, determine the nationality or social position of the one who seemed to me, by natural right, to be above any rank. A feeling of the most passionate admiration filled my mind. It was so intense that it must have communicated itself as a message to its object. She gravely turned for a moment in my direction, smiled, and then turned her attention again to the work in the council-chamber.

I studied for a long time the workings of the Council before I fully understood its methods, the great power exercised by this circle, and its daring grasp of the questions of the day. Instead of seeking to act as a recorder of any portion of the proceedings, I will give a few general facts noted during my first hour of observation. I could not give more if I would, and I have no desire to say one word that could in any way injure the cause of those who have trusted me.

I first observed that while no one was in absolute authority, Mortimer appeared for the time to be the directing mind. It was he who made suggestions and introduced subjects to be considered. I learned later that the direction of the Council passed in turns around the circle at each

meeting. Each was engaged in working for unselfish purposes, and as no personal ambition was possible within the circle, perfect courtesy and consideration prevailed. The speech or comment of the director's mind was taken up by the one who, by chance, sat at his right hand, and so the talk or the presentation of opinions passed around the circle.

Differences of opinion occurred, but when it came to final action, the best judgment or suggestion prevailed, as if the Council, being ruled by higher purposes than mere self, had infallible guides to lead them to what was the best.

Each subject, such as the condition of a particular nation, was shown by a succession of pictures passing over the face of the globe. The tremendous struggles of an overweighted humanity fighting for a place of security, the rapt and insolent selfishness of the few who, by chance or good fortune, were placed above the universal law of contest, were given in clear, sharp and distinct pictures.

The attention of the Council was first directed to European affairs. I learned, to my great surprise, that two of the most imposing potentialities in Europe had direct affiliations with the Council of Ten and coöperated with it.

I saw for the first time the wise, serene face of Leo XIII., which appeared in the globe soon after the meeting of the Council. I saw him sitting alone in the privacy of his palace, in his robes of white, turning his gentle eyes upon the Council who were brought in direct accord with him through a globe suspended over his library desk. I learned that it was through his desire for peace and goodness to dominate selfishness, that he had been brought to work in harmony with the powerful Council of Ten. He saw them as in a vision only, but their influence was ever at his right hand. I now understood for the first time some of the apparent contradictions of his political actions and why the influence of his holy office was now constantly turning from the old forms of monarchical rule to the best forms of self-government inspired by modern democracy. I saw that the lifting of the little finger of this great prelate would at once bring about the fall of the monarchy and the rise of a republic in Italy. But the people were not yet ripe

for this change. At present it could not be brought about without the shedding of blood, so the influences watched and waited. I now understood why the holy father of the Catholic Church immures himself in the Vatican and no longer goes in the world. What need had he of the world? It lay before him in the flashing scenes of the globe, and his every working moment is needed to devise some plan for the relief of suffering and cruelty daily disclosed to him.

I saw, secluded in his closely guarded castle at Gatschina, the Imperial Czar of all the Russias, and learned that it was not through fear of the Nihilists that he remained so constantly out of sight of the public. He too was closely affiliated with the Council of Ten, and upon him they showered all their influence, making him the one mighty war lord enlisted upon the side of peace, so that while he lives war is moved farther and farther away.

After this I saw pass in review the various royalties of Europe. All were subject directly to the influences of the Council, but only the Czar and the Pope were conscious of the influence, and in direct contact with it. The German Emperor I saw as he was changing from a wild and dissolute youth into a strong, forceful power, marching in high directions, but moving in erratic curves of action owing to the pressure brought to bear upon him. I saw numerous royalties, stupid, eaten up with petty vanities, imagining themselves as specially authorized by God Almighty to lead empty, vain, animal lives, without one thought of the responsibilities toward the people in their charge. I saw disgraceful downfalls preparing for them before the swift rising tide of republicanism visible throughout the length and breadth of Europe today.

I saw one monarch near to the time when he would be deemed worthy to enter into the affiliation with the Council of Ten. There was the gracious King of Belgium, who has devoted his life and private fortune to stamping out the murderous slave-trade of Africa. Instead of taking his ease and fattening upon the spoils of his position, his eyes, blinded by tears of sympathy, had turned towards the negroes of Africa, tortured by the rapacious slave-traders, whose murders in

one year reached the astonishing number of one hundred thousand. If it had not been for his gentle yielding to the imperious impression sent him by the Council of Ten, the mob in Brussels would have been shot down by the orders of his ministers, mere selfish politicians, when the workingmen arose and justly demanded an increase in their suffrage rights.

I observed that the movement to increase the armed forces of Europe, the stimulus to increased skill in the manufacture of devices to kill, came directly from the Council of Ten. They sought thus to make war odious and terrible and so add a bulwark to the edifice of peace.

As the scenes flashed in rapid succession upon the globe, the discussion of this inspired Council ran on with the musical, murmuring evenness of a brook running on over smoothly worn surfaces down the incline of thought to the broader sea of accomplishment. The smallest subject, the sorrows of an individual were as often considered as affairs of national or world-wide importance. Those who were struggling upwards in any calling of life, who showed any indication of a noble character, were observed, or noted upon the records of the society, and later were commended to the care of some of the smaller stations. Small lapses from the

path of high endeavor were not noticed. The spirit of forgiveness and charity hovered over every judgment. Even the worst of men were shown in rapidly flying reflections to have qualities that occasionally made them subject to the influence of the Council of Ten.

Each one of the inner council lives in the world. They are all independent, each one answerable only to himself; but to describe more closely their positions and their actual relations with the busy world where they are known, would require a knowledge not given me.

The Council elects its own members, and when a vacancy occurs, through death or absence, the gap is filled with one of the best members of the smaller societies. No one who has not utterly conquered selfishness can ever be considered as a candidate here. More than this, knowledge and administrative ability are needed to obtain a seat at the round table of this modern and model government. This information came to me in a direct message from Mortimer Mortimer.

I was strongly interested in the equal participation of women in the Council, and to see how strongly their keenness of vision, their refinement and tenderness of heart, supplemented the strength and audacity of the men. Yet I saw this Council

united, battling in vain to overcome the adamant wall of selfishness of women, in the treatment of the fallen of their own sex.

The session lasted for nearly two hours. Towards the last, my attention was concentrated upon one member only of the Council. I could only see her, as she sat at the table. I was powerless to disengage her attention from the Council and its proceedings. My will was too weak to compel the slightest message regarding her individuality. I see her now, as I write, my heart throbbing with the bitter-sweet memory of the picture she presented as she sat in this council of administration, charged with the remedying of the



Drawn by
F. O. Small.

" 'WELL, YOU HAD A TREMENDOUS SLEEP?' "

evils of a suffering world. Her white satin dress and the pearls which she wore set off her fair and radiant beauty. Her face was a pure oval. Her color was fair and delicate. Her eyes were dark, showing soft and clear between the long lashes, under perfectly-lined brows. Her nose was a pure Grecian. Her mouth was full and small, disclosing even, white teeth, as she spoke or smiled. Her hair, a reddish brown, was combed high from her forehead and gathered in a regal crown upon the top of the gracefully poised head. But her mere physical beauty was enhanced a thousand-fold by the inner light of a noble soul that shone through the transparent mask of her emotional countenance.

As I looked, the light in the globe faded, and I saw nothing. I looked for hours for something more, but nothing came; then, exhausted by the many emotions of the day, at midnight I fell into a sleep broken by dreams. When next they opened, I found myself back in my rooms in Half-Moon street. Lord Robert Melrose was at my side.

"Well," said he, "you have had a tremendous sleep."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, it is now four o'clock in the afternoon. Don't you think it about time for you to get up?"

"You are not surprised to see me?"

"Why should I be?"

"What was your theory concerning my disappearance?"

"Your disappearance? You are dreaming still about Mortimer."

"What day is this?"

"December fourteenth."

"We came back from Warwick on the thirteenth. I have been away several days. Don't try to deceive me. Have you received an order from the Central society concerning me?"

"See here, my dear fellow, you are taking my talk in the past too seriously. The Russian society was all right and straight. More than that I do not know. I only know the servants say that you have been sleeping here all day and that they have tried in vain to wake you. I tried repeatedly when I came in, half an hour ago, and was just beginning to be alarmed, notwithstanding the apparent naturalness of your sleep, when you woke up."

"Then your father, the Duke of Wex, has not disappeared?"

"I should think not. I saw him when I was coming back this afternoon."

"And the editor of *The Wasp*? Is he in town?"

"I am sure I don't know."

"You will at least find the note from him in the top of my writing-desk."

Lord Robert looked and came back, shaking his head. Here I became immersed in thought, and scarcely listened to my friend's talk.

Later we dined in a neighboring restaurant; but I could not accept his invitation to go to the theater. I returned to my lodgings alone. After some thought I decided to relate my experience to my friend when he should return at midnight.

"Well," said he, after the recital of my story, "who shall say how much reality there was or was not in your dream? I looked today for Mortimer Mortimer, but he has left London, without saying a word as to his return."

I am now sitting alone in my bed-room, stunned with a sense of personal loss. I have looked upon the unattainable. But something within me says that it was not wholly a dream, and that, if I am worthy, I shall some day learn more of the mysteries which have been half revealed to me. Did I lose my opportunity because I dared, being still unworthy and unprepared, to aspire to the love of one of the high Council of Ten?

A knock at the door. A boy enters with a cablegram. I tear it open:

"Send me at once full story of the Disappearance syndicate. Consider yourself free from your engagement. Give up looking for Musgrove. *THE WASP*."

Here is the story of the Disappearance syndicate—not as I prepared it for *The Wasp*, but the real story, as I know it.

I have never since heard one word of my friend Musgrove. Neither have I heard again of, nor have I seen Mortimer Mortimer. I have settled in London, and I am a member of the Russian society, and if I am never permitted to gaze again upon the fair princess of my life, I shall, with all my heart and soul, try to live and die worthy of her, even if, after all, the Council of Ten may prove but a mere dream or a skillful illusion of Mortimer Mortimer.